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Marg.t Breckinridge.

A

MEMORIAL

OF

MRS. MARGARET BRECKINRIDGE.

IN TWO PARTS.

PART I. MEMOIR, AND FUNERAL SERMON.
PART II. LETTERS TO HER SURVIVING CHILDREN.

PHILADELPHIA:
WILLIAM S. MARTIEN.
1839.

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CONTENTS.

PART I.

Page.

INTRODUCTION, ... 13

CHAPTER I.

Life of Mrs. Breckinridge, . . . 17

CHAPTER II.

Additional Illustrations of the Life and Character of Mrs. Breckinridge, . . 35

Her Religious Character, . . . 42

Her dedication to the work of Foreign Missions, 46

Her Sacrifices for the Church of God, . 47

Her Last Sickness and Death, . . 54

CHAPTER III.

Closing Reflections, . . . 61

SUBMISSION:

A SERMON—by the Rev. A. Alexander, D. D. 69

PART II.

LETTERS OF A GRANDFATHER.

LETTER I.

Page.

Introductory, ... 5

LETTER II.

Human Nature, ... 10

LETTER III.

The Way of Salvation, . . . 17

LETTER IV.

The Bible, ... 29

LETTER V.

Prayer, ... 37

LETTER VI.

Cultivation of the Mind, . . . 45

LETTER VII.

Cultivation of the Heart and the Moral Habits, 67

LETTER VIII.

Manners, ... 87

A

MEMOIR

OF

MRS. MARGARET BRECKINRIDGE.

"Jesus wept."

PART I.

INTRODUCTION.

More than a year has now passed since Mrs. Margaret Breckinridge, the beloved subject of the following brief notices, was taken from us into the saints' everlasting rest. By that event, the little family of which she was the joy and crown, was dissolved. The surviving parent felt that God had committed to him the interesting but mournful duty of preserving the memory of so inestimable a friend. But it is long after such an event, before the mind is sufficiently tranquil to utter our thoughts and feelings without excess. The peaceable fruits of so dreadful a chastisement succeed, alas! but slowly in our intractable hearts, to the distraction of grief, and the desolation of the grave.

It was in the midst of the deepest of his sorrow, also, that the writer was hastened (by a very kind Providence, as he now sees it to have been) into the active duties of an office which left no rest for body or mind during almost an entire year. So that if his feelings had allowed the attempt at preparing a Memoir, his duty to the Church of God forbade it.

In these trying and peculiar circumstances, he was permitted to call in the aid of those honoured and venerable Friends, from whose hands, in a happier day, he had received the lovely wife of his youth. They of all others knew her best, especially from her birth to her marriage. They had done most, under God, to fit her for life's duties, and its close; and to make her "worthy to be had in everlasting remembrance." And none were judged to be so well qualified to do justice to her memory. To the one we are indebted for the following interesting Sketch, making the first chapter. To the

other for the valuable Letters to her surviving children, forming the second part of this memorial.

While all must admire the delicacy and candour with which this sketch is drawn, it is evident to those who knew the deceased, that much remains to be said which ought not to be omitted—especially in regard to that portion of her life, embracing more than fifteen years, which passed between the time of leaving the parental roof, and her lamented death. In attempting to supply this omission, the writer felt the inconvenience—even awkwardness of returning upon a narrative which seemed to have been brought to an appropriate close. But this was thought preferable to leaving the memoir incomplete; or to breaking the thread of the narrative given in the first chapter.

And moreover it was felt that the design of the work which called for the additional chapters, dispensed with form in the man-

ner of furnishing them. It is intended to preserve the memory of the beloved dead for her bereaved children, and her numerous kindred and friends, rather than to unveil her retiring character to the public eye. The work being designed, not so much for general circulation as for family use, is rather *printed*, than *published;* and all its imperfections will readily be overlooked by those who will come to these pages, as Mary went to the tomb of Lazarus—"to weep there."

MEMOIR.

CHAPTER I.

A NARRATIVE of the life of our departed friends, bears some resemblance to the representation, on canvass, of their persons and features; it serves to restore and collect our scattered thoughts, and revive our affections; and prevents the hand of time from obliterating entirely, their peculiar mental and moral lineaments.

It was in consequence of the necessity of this help to our natural infirmities, that our Lord gave to his people the bread and wine, as a symbol of his body and blood, and said, "Do this in remembrance of me." He knew too well our careless, wandering hearts, to trust the recollections, even of *his* great and lovely character, to our unfaithful keeping, and established, as a help to his word, the ordinance which was to continue unto the end of the world, "as a memorial of him." And we trust that his people are permitted to endeavour to perpetuate the remembrance of each other by means, which, however they may come greatly

short of the significant emblem ordained by himself, will assist in enabling them "to love one another as he also loved them."

In view of this encouragement, given us in the Scriptures of inspiration, we would endeavour to bring together, and exhibit, in the history of the short life of Mrs. Margaret Breckinridge, some of those graces of a Christian character, which lead us to hope that the finger of the Lord had engraven his name on her heart, and that his grace was carrying on the work, notwithstanding much infirmity of flesh and spirit, until the body of sin and death within her was rolled away, and a simple, undivided hold taken on the Rock of ages.

She was born September 29th, 1802, in New York, and educated for several years under the immediate instruction of the sanctuary, in a comparatively pure state of the Church, when the name and influence of a few such venerable and holy men as the Rev. Dr. John Rodgers, had thrown a restraint on the vices of the world around them, as well as on the constantly recurring disorders of the Church, so that the very vagrants of the street felt their presence.* Every pastor of a

* The appearance of these servants of God, in any part of the city, seemed to make "iniquity hide its head," and was often the means of dispersing an idle, youthful group, in which profanity and disorder were beginning their destructive career. Through their influence, in a great measure, the Sabbath was, at least

flock of Jesus Christ seemed to feel it his privilege, as well as his duty, to feed the lambs of his flock himself, and did not commit them to the ever-varying, heterogeneous instruction of others. The Scriptures, and the Catechism, it was his own business to inculcate; and the same afternoon in each week, had been for many years, in several of the churches of the city, of various denominations, the season for this instruction.

By these and other means, the Bible had taken a systematic form in Margaret's mind, very early; and whenever she met, even in childhood, with a scriptural scene or subject, she generally knew where to place it, and was particularly animated by it. And this peculiar skill, and taste, continued and increased until childhood passed away, and the pride and enjoyment of life opened a new scene before her.

For a time it seemed as if every vestige of the sensibility arising from religious instruction would be swept away. She had friends who wished to see her enjoying the *innocent* pleasures of youth; especially as in person and mind there was a promise of peculiar adaptation to them. And there was a will of her own very clearly developing, which wanted more restraint than parents are

externally, a holy day, on which the public ways exhibited no crowd or bustle, but what was of necessity occasioned by a church-going people.

generally willing to exercise. Many interpositions, however, in providence occurred, which, though sad in the view of her family, proved a real deliverance to her—frequently arresting her first decisive step in folly.

At the age of eleven she was removed with her family to Princeton, in consequence of a call which her father received, to a Professorship in the Theological Seminary in that place. Being thus separated from many snares incident to a city life, she began anew, as it were, to form habits and connexions, which, although in some respects, more dangerous and ensnaring than those which she had left, had not "grown with her growth, and strengthened with her strength;" and were, on that account, more ready to yield, when the follies of youth passed away, and the solemnities of this world, in view of another, opened before her.

The want of a good school in Princeton, induced her parents to send her, at the age of about fourteen years, to Philadelphia, for the purpose of obtaining for her some finish to the education which she had received at home. She remained there nearly a year, residing with an aunt, and attending a daily and well conducted school. Indeed it was *her* privilege, as well as the privilege of many others, to receive instruction from a teacher, who not only was competent to every branch of polite learning which adorns the mind of a female,

but desirous of having all which he taught so sanctified as to reach the heart, and be made the means of communicating spiritual and saving, as well as intellectual instruction.*

The immediate effect of this experiment was injurious to Margaret's disposition and deportment. She returned to her parents with more love for the world, and a better opinion of herself; and of consequence was less docile. It was evident that the atmosphere of a city was not the element in which her heart would receive the best influence.

In a revival which took place in Princeton, when she was about eighteen years of age, an interest was excited in some of her pious female friends for her conversion. They concluded to make her the subject of special prayer. Of this she was entirely ignorant, until the evidence appeared in herself of the verity of the promise, as to the result of "fervent, effectual prayer." A sermon of the celebrated President Edwards, read

* Many will probably have reason for everlasting rejoicing in the kind arrangement which placed them under Mr. Jaudon's instruction. He was truly "a man of God," and the effects of his wise and holy instruction and discipline, we have no doubt are felt in the bosom of many families, and in the hearts of many individuals in Philadelphia, to this day, who will, we trust, be prepared to meet him, where, having turned many to righteousness, "he shall shine as a star for ever and ever."

in a small, social meeting, arrested her attention, and brought her to continued, deep, serious thinking, which ended, as she thought, in a new view of everlasting things. With all the sanguine feelings of youth, she judged herself prepared to be united with the Church; but owing to the unwillingness of her parents to risk the possibility of a premature profession of religion, this step was delayed.

In connexion with this period of her life, it seems necessary to relate some circumstances which took place with regard to a much loved sister of hers; not many years younger than herself. They had been so closely educated together, as to make them one in many of their views and feelings.

Elizabeth, in giving an account of the exercises of her own mind on the subject of religion, some time after they took place, said, that she experienced an irresistible feeling of contempt for the concern which Margaret manifested, and concluded that she was indulging a mere hypocritical affectation; in consequence of which she was beginning to make some observations to this effect, when, in a moment, a deep conviction fastened on her conscience, of the danger of resisting what might prove to be the influence of the Holy Spirit. This impression resulted in a real concern for herself, and in views equally solemn with those expressed by Margaret.

They both now made progress together in their inquiries and experience, and were a mutual help, rather than a hinderance to each other. Both soon thought that they had obtained an interest in "Him, whose blood cleanseth from all sin."

It appeared, however, soon after this, as if our fears with regard to Margaret were but too well founded. "Because of manifold temptations," she seemed to be taking a new hold on the world; but a state of things about the same time, began with Elizabeth, which disciplined and humbled her spirit; and she was soon enabled to realize all the insufficiency and uncertainty of this world, as a portion.

Many doubts with regard to the genuineness of the change which Elizabeth trusted had taken place in her heart, increased by the weakness which rapidly declining health had induced, perplexed and troubled her, and made her more and more unwilling to make a profession of religion. She had witnessed some of the extravagances of revivals, and felt the danger of being deceived, and of "having a name to live whilst she was dead."

In January, 1823, Margaret was married to the Rev. John Breckinridge, and returned with him to Kentucky, his native State, in the spring of the same year. In consequence of a call which her husband received, to a church in Kentucky, (which he accepted,) they were soon after this settled in Lexington. Her departure from her early home

was her first real trial. For although, through the course of several months, she had taken a prospective view of this arrangement, with much buoyancy of spirits, as the time approached, every circumstance connected with a separation from all the associations of her childhood and youth, seemed to produce a new and deeper impression, and seven or eight hundred miles appeared at length, as almost an interminable space. The sadness which irresistibly overspread her countenance, convinced her friends that when, in view of Mr. Breckinridge's first destination, she had given herself unreservedly to a foreign mission, she, like many others, little knew her own heart, and all the sacrifices which such a destination involved. And when it was seen expedient that this intention should be relinquished by him, for a plan more eligible in the view of his fathers in the ministry, a release from this more enduring trial, formed no small part of the considerations which assisted in making her submissively bow to one so much more lenient. And indeed, she had reason to say, that goodness and mercy had followed her at every step. For this very trial which sobered her countenance, made her heart better, and prepared the way for deeper self-examination, and probably more fervent prayer; and the result was, that with a trembling confidence she united herself with her husband's church in Lexington, a few months after he took charge of it. From her letters, after this

event, we learned that her connexion with the church took place at the same time—it is thought on the same day—in which her sister Elizabeth, having been delivered from the many doubts which had clouded *her* mind, made a profession of religion in the church in Princeton. This co-incidence in providence, having occurred without any mutual intercourse or understanding on the subject, seemed so consistent with the plans of Him who "sees the end from the beginning," and who, from their first serious impressions, appeared to have united the lines of their experience until they ended in one gracious result, that it did much to confirm their friends in the hope, that a good "work was begun in them which should be carried on." They felt constrained to say, "It is the Lord's doings and wonderful in our eyes."

The kind and affectionate family in Kentucky, of which she now made one, assisted much in alleviating the pressure of sorrowful recollections, and in making the resolution which she had formed of "learning in whatsoever state she was, therewith to be content," more practical, and more enduring; and when Mr. Breckinridge was called to Baltimore in 1826, although she was pleased with the prospect of getting nearer to her early home, she felt that a new tie had been formed which could not be broken, even partially, without much pain. It was a source of much grateful recollection to her, that she was not permitted to use any undue influ-

ence to lead her husband away from his congregation in Lexington, to which she was indebted in so considerable a degree, for the pleasant circumstances which surrounded her.

Her health was remarkably firm, especially for one of her delicate appearance, for several years after her marriage, and during all the time that her husband had a settled charge. In Baltimore, to which he removed from Lexington, she seemed to realize with much gratitude, the particularly pleasant circumstances in which her family was placed. Situated on the direct way between her husband's relatives, endeared to her by so many pleasant recollections, and the family of her youth, with both of which she could have frequent intercourse, and in the midst of a kind circle of friends, not limited by the bounds of Mr. Breckinridge's congregation, she was literally at home; and when the summons came to call him to another sphere of labour in the Church, she was the last to be persuaded that it was his duty to obey it, and reluctantly yielded to the opinion of those whose judgment she honoured.

From this time she may truly be said to have been a sacrifice to the interests of the Church. The unsettling of her domestic duties and habits, to which her temperament was particularly adapted, was, probably, directly and indirectly at the foundation of those causes, which gradually but too surely undermined her health, and prepared her

for a premature grave. Her last change of residence, which placed her in Princeton by the side of her paternal family, and amongst many of her youthful associates, seemed to her to fill up the measure, as it regarded this world, of that providential goodness "which had followed her all the days of her life;" and she said, not long after it took place, with a humility which was in itself an evidence of her gracious state, "I think, in view of all my mercies, there is a thankfulness experienced which is not the natural growth of my own heart." To us who remain it is given to see, that these unusual comforts were mercifully intended to soothe the infirmities of a rapidly dissolving body, and soften the approach of the last and most formidable enemy.

Several attacks of disease in the course of two years, which threatened to be immediately fatal, were, by the aid of skilful medical treatment, happily arrested, but not until their baleful effect had fastened on her feeble body, and each had left her "more a prey for death." And it was a cause of much thankfulness to her friends, that instead of one of those unexpected instant departures, which so frequently occur, and which in her case it was often feared would take place, the approach of death was gradual and mild, so as to involve no pain, and but little surprise.

The simplicity of her character appeared through all her last days, especially after she ascertained

that her end was not far off. Her words were few, because she studied to utter none but "the words of truth and soberness;" she seemed to feel that there *might be* a parade even in dying.

After a short conversation in her room a day or two before she departed, on the subject of the unprofitableness of our best works, which we found had deeply exercised her mind, she remarked with much emotion, a tear starting to her eye, "I feel the truth of these remarks;" but, after a pause, she said, "I have *tried* to do my duty as a wife and as a mother; I have *endeavoured* to conduct the affairs of my family with discretion, and to instruct my children in the best things." She evidently clung to this as an evidence of grace, (and not at all as a cause of acceptance with God,) and as affording some hope for her children, when relied on in view of the promises of Him who says, that if this precious seed is sowed, grace shall insure the crop.

Her Sabbath evenings, after the good old way of our puritan fathers, saw her with all her household, over whom she had any authority, gathered around her for the purpose of giving them that instruction which, with the promised blessing, would save them from the paths of sin and folly in this world, and prepare them for enjoying the blessedness of another. And through the distractions of an unsettled life, and the hinderances experienced in a large boarding house, in which several winters were

spent with her family, she persevered as far as possible, in the instruction of both children and servants in the week and on the Sabbath, with a determination which both she and her friends thought had shortened her life.

In view of this peculiar faithfulness to her domestic duties, we are the more willing to offer an apology for what appeared to some of her friends, an indifference to various extra means; which in these last times have been esteemed needful for the awakening of a slumbering church.

When her mind began to open to this subject, the glory of our revivals was beginning to be tarnished. "The enemy had begun to sow his tares." The extravagance which so frequently attended them, had produced in her no little disgust for what she thought the mere machinery of religion. In such circumstances, it is difficult to "choose the good, and refuse the evil." The cast of her mind was such, that parade in any thing, and especially in the vital concerns, in which is involved our everlasting destiny, irresistibly revolted her mind. And the errors in principle and in practice, which had been by these means insinuated into, and corrupted the legitimate and professed doctrines and ordinances of the Presbyterian Church, greatly impaired her confidence in what many good people esteemed genuine revivals of religion. Subsequent events have abundantly confirmed the wisdom of her early and deep distrust.

After her constitution had been tried with another violent and unusual attack, in March, 1838, which prostrated nearly all her remaining strength in a few hours, it was evident to many of her friends, that recovery was no longer to be expected. Every means, however, were made use of, that might in any way prove salutary; many of which, as has often occurred, were rather injurious than beneficial. As a last resource, a journey was commenced, for the purpose of trying the Springs of Virginia, so highly recommended to invalids. She was not permitted, however, to go beyond Philadelphia. Her physicians there, judging so long a journey very hazardous, gently arrested it, by proposing a delay of a few days; thus endeavouring to obviate the effects of any disappointment which she might experience. Her own views seemed, spontaneously, to meet theirs, and a quiet acquiescence was every day more manifest. After a consultation of physicians, in which they agreed that an effort might be safely made for her return to Princeton, the sweet complacency with which she said to a very kind friend, who was visiting her, "I am going home to-morrow," encouraged a hope that she had realized her danger; and that *her* will was gradually moulding to the Divine will, and she preparing for a far better home.

It appeared as if she was permitted to get thus far on her journey, in order to gratify the feelings, and experience the renewed kindness of friends,

whom her husband had attached to his family, from his temporary labours amongst them. The attention of these, and indeed many others, whom their interesting circumstances were a means of winning to them, is deeply felt in the family circle, of which she was a beloved member; and which will continue to be felt, as long as her memory shall be cherished amongst them.

It was with difficulty that she was removed to her own residence at Princeton, a few days before she died, fully sensible that her departure was not far off. One of her anxious friends, wishing to be more satisfied of this, said: "You know, my dear Margaret, how ill you are?" A most emphatic "O yes," silenced every remaining doubt.

The day before she died, the conversation leading to the subject of death, she said, "I am only afraid of the article of death: I know that when this is over, I shall be in Jesus' arms." From one, so slow to speak, these were encouraging words.

A few hours after this, she awoke from a light sleep, with that sort of bewildered spirit, which is frequently experienced under circumstances of so much weakness, especially when accompanied with, perhaps, the effects of an opiate, and repeated the *name* of a person, with which she had been familiar in her childhood. She observed, "what easy words!" Some one present remarked—there are words equally easy. She said, "tell me some."

Upon being referred to a Psalm which had been spoken of the day before, she commenced, as having found something exceedingly pleasant—"The Lord is my shepherd"—and continued to the end of this short and interesting portion of the Word of God, in a tone of sweetness and solemnity, which impressed every one present, adding her testimony to the sweetness of the words. It appeared as if, while the world was fast receding, her character was rapidly finishing in the mould of this precious Word.

Reason was continued to her until the last departing moment, when, after a violent but short struggle, which seemed to arrest every mental exercise, except that which led her spirit immediately to "Him who takes away the sting of death," the freshness of former years was restored to her complexion, which had been, for some months, suffused with feverishness, and marked with suffering, and a calm and solemn composure settled on her countenance, appearing full of meaning, which persuaded those who were around her, that she had some communication to make. But her mouth was sealed, and her hand could no longer effect the gentlest pressure. We were left to conclude, that when in her agony she had cried—"Come, Lord Jesus—come quickly;"—"Lord Jesus receive my spirit," "she was heard, in that she asked;" and the freshness of everlasting youth,

casting one parting ray upon her mortal countenance, had passed upon her, and "she had gone to be forever with the Lord."

"She being dead yet speaketh," and speaks, especially, to all who yet live of her youthful associates. Many of them are, as she was, called to sustain the character of wife and mother, and their history in its prominent features, most probably resembles hers. Her course was marked with much failure in duty, over which she mourned, and, in view of which she seemed deeply humbled. She once said—many months before she died—"O! if the Lord were to send his bereaving commission into my family, I could never forgive myself for the manner in which I have failed to improve the trust committed to me, and fulfilled the duties to which I have been called." Hear the voice which speaking, says, "My dear companions in sin and infirmity, I leave you a poor example. But I exhort you to to become believingly and affectionately acquainted with Him, who has borne *me* through the dark valley and shadow of death, and 'presented me faultless before his Father, clothed in his righteousness, and washed in his blood.'"

"Ye cannot, though *Christian* wives and mothers, do the things ye would;" but there is a fountain opened, in which your poorest desires and efforts, though like filthy rags, "may be washed and made white, and made instrumental for much

good. Point this out to your children, "talk to them in the house and by the way, in sitting down and rising up," of this only hope of perishing sinners. And lest, after all, they should come short, plead, unceasingly, the promises for them, and take hold by faith of the blessing. O! how will you rejoice if you can say, "Here am I Lord, and the children thou hast given me." In order to sustain your character as wives, aim continually, by prayer, to obtain the gift of a meek and quiet spirit, "which in the sight of God is of great price, that even the unbelieving husband may be won to the knowledge of the truth."

May such exhortations from our departed friends, reach us all, and be sanctified to us—and may we "exhort *one another*, daily," so that our social intercourse may be made the means of grace, and assist in preparing us for our last great change!

CHAPTER II.

ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF MRS. MARGARET BRECKINRIDGE.

WHOEVER has been called, in the midst of life, to part with 'the wife of his youth'—if these pages should chance to meet his eye—will *know* what the writer has felt. Such a bereavement must be *felt*, in order to be understood. There is a shock in its coming for which no foresight or submission can fully prepare us. There is a chasm created by it which nothing can fill. It is a new experience, replete with dreadful desolation. It is a wonderful attribute of grace that can make these great afflictions so "work *for us* an exceeding and eternal weight of glory," that the most weighty and enduring of them all, shall seem, in comparison, to be "light, and but for a moment." Yet "no chastisement," (especially such as this) "for the present seemeth to be joyous, but rather grievous." God intends that we shall be *moved* by such visitations. The call which they utter is too costly to be lightly felt. The stroke is too deep to be hastily healed. "To *faint* when we are rebuked of Him," is to reproach the goodness of God, when we ought to "lay hold on his

strength." But insensibility to his afflictive dispensations is to "despise" the methods of his grace. And who can fail to feel at such a moment! To find one's self strangely, and after all the warnings mercifully given, suddenly left alone; in the midst of life to be broken in twain; to come to a time when you may no longer pray with her whose presence sweetened devotion itself; no more pray for her who many a year has been the dear burden of all your intercessions; to see your orphan babes left desolate, and enhancing your woe, by being unconscious of their own; yea, "to sorrow most of all" for those dread words, "that you shall see her face no more!" This is sorrow! If it were possible, and being so, were right to ask it for others, we might pray for our readers, that they may be forever ignorant of our experience. But we know that every house is appointed to such a sorrow, sooner or later. They who are yet to pass through these deep waters, if they cannot now fully enter into our trials, may at least be expected to excuse this humble tribute to the dead, as an amiable weakness.

But it is not bleeding affection, merely, which has prompted us to add to the foregoing brief narrative, these imperfect illustrations of the life and character of Mrs. Margaret Breckinridge. The bereaved children having been early called to lose a mother's care, justly claim of surviving friends

to preserve her image that they may gaze on it, and her example that they may imitate it, in after life. It is a cruel addition to an orphan's lot, to consign to the tomb even the memory of the dead. We refer not to the indecent and revolting haste with which every memorial of the deceased is swept into oblivion by those who, studious of new relations, are faithful only to forget. Such a spirit is abhorrent to every sentiment of humanity and religion. But it often happens that the disconsolate survivor, for a season careless of all things but of grief, neglects to treasure and record what God gave in peculiar trust to him—for the good of others. That godly example, which it cost the toils and the trials of a life to exhibit, ought not to be permitted to perish from the world. That "death of the saints," which "is precious in the sight of the Lord," and which so gloriously shows forth his praise, is worthy of a monument that time cannot consume. These should live! We should embalm them in the memory of the heart. We should hand them down in the tradition of faithful love. We should record them in a household book, if not publish them to the world—in honour of Jehovah; in memory of the beloved dead; and for the good of those who, even while they were spared to them, were too young to know their value. It is the memory of the wicked alone which God has doomed to rot; or if it live, to stand as a beacon on the brow of death.

There is another consideration of great tenderness and force by which we have been influenced in making these sketches. Woman dwells, to speak so, in the shade of retirement; and not like man, in the blaze of public life. In the household she sits enthroned, the weaker vessel, but the stronger power. Yet the domestic circle, in a great degree, circumscribes her influence; shuts in her character. Her refinement—her patience—her humility—her cheerfulness in trial—her fortitude—her readiness to forgive—her faithful, constant love—her self-devotion to her children—her personal charms—her domestic virtues—her Christian graces—which make her

"The light and music of our happy homes,"

are little known beyond the narrow boundary of her own family, on which they continually rest, "like the dew of Hermon that descended upon the mountains of Zion." It is not less so with her domestic trials—with her perplexing domestic duties, as she meekly toils in "patient continuance" amidst their innumerable detail, and ever returning round. Now while the full disclosure and rewards must be reserved to the great day of final account, it is a special duty, on proper occasions, to bring such excellence to view. Without our care, this never will be done, since the graces that most adorn, are the most retiring. By an affectionate diligence in

this service, a thousand pearls might be brought from the recesses of domestic life, and added to the too scanty stock of memorable worthies. At least, we ought not to make oblivion the penalty of domestic virtue. On the other hand, the doing of proper justice to real female merit, would most effectually rebuke that assurance of coarse and fanatic women, who, in the insulted name of God, assume the prerogative, and attempt the offices of the stronger sex—forgetting that the immodesty which is offensive to all men, can never be an offering pleasing to a God of purity and order. By presenting to mankind examples of Christian women revolving in orderly beauty, and shining with mild lustre in their appointed course, we not only preserve the memory of those who rest from their labours, but we diffuse their influence abroad. If we may but do justice to the subject of these notices, she would be herself the only being likely to complain, for she shrunk with instinctive sensibility from every such disclosure of her retiring character.

Without repeating what has been said in the first chapter, we proceed to fill up the narrative given therein, by additional notices, which some one ought to furnish, and which a parent could not.

It was God's peculiar mercy to Margaret (Miller) Breckinridge, that she came into life under parental influence so admirable in all respects, that

she may be said to have been born and reared in a family, which, like that of Aquilla and Priscilla, "*had a church in the house.*" She enjoyed, in its happiest form, a domestic Christian education, having the BIBLE for the basis of knowledge; the Parents for instructors; the family fire-side for the school of manners; and the royal law of love and truth, as the standard and source of all true politeness. Truly it is a goodly spectacle in these days of pretension, and vulgar parade; of shallow learning, and degenerate manners, to behold here and there a mother in Israel, after "the manner of the olden time," training her little flock without the aids of modern parties, fashions, vain accomplishments, and earthly tinsel; waiting with them day by day at the door-posts of that wisdom by which grace is poured into the lips, and mien, as well as heart—where "woman indeed becomes the glory of man;" (1 Cor. xi. 7,) and then to see her lead them forth into life, from these sacred shades, polished after the similitude of a palace.* Such a

* The following passages are so graphic, that it would seem as if our day had set for the likeness, though they were written two thousand six hundred years ago:—"Moreover the Lord saith, because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks, wincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet: Therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion: The Lord will take away in that day the bravery of their tinkling ornaments

school was well fitted to form the mind, refine the manners, and under God to save the soul of our lamented friend. God had been pleased to endow her with an unusual measure of personal beauty, and great charm of character and mind. So that as soon as she entered into society, which she did with great reserve, she attracted much attention, and was universally admired. These things combined, might have been expected, especially in early life, to draw her into the world; and lead her away from the humbling and self-denying religion of her father's house. But even before she gave her heart to God, there was an inimitable simplicity in her character, manner, and dress, which evinced either a total unconsciousness of her attractions, or a noble superiority to human praise. Her good taste, and the better principles of the Gospel, enabled her in all her after life, notwithstanding the many temptations to which she was exposed, to exhibit the same transparent and lovely example.

about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon, the chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers, the bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the head-bands, and the ear-rings, the rings, the changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the whimples, and the crisping pins, and the glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the veils."—Isaiah iii. chap. Behold the contrast! 1 Peter iii. 1–6. 1 Timothy ii. chap. 9–10.

HER RELIGIOUS CHARACTER.

The work of the Spirit was early begun in her heart; but it was for some time resisted. Our acquaintance with her began just as she was closing her domestic education, (in her sixteenth year,) and almost before she had looked this evil world in the face. In 1820 she became decidedly serious; and after several months of deep religious impression, expressed a trembling hope of an interest in the Divine Redeemer. At this time she was strongly disposed to make a public profession of religion; but the salutary caution of her parents induced her to postpone it to a future occasion. Subsequently to this, the extreme fear which she ever after cherished, of self-delusion in religious exercises; the high standard of Christian character which she had proposed to herself; and her strong conviction of the frequent and very hurtful inconsistencies of many professors of religion; influenced her, in the end to defer that solemn step to a distant day. That day, as stated in the narrative, did not arrive until after her marriage, her removal to Kentucky, and her settlement as the wife of a pastor. In the mean time, however, it cannot be doubted, that the grace of God had taken possession of her heart. And when finally she did publicly connect herself with the people of God, her tenderness of heart, her self-distrust, her deep

humility, her child-like simplicity, and transparency of Christian character, condemned her *only* for a delayed profession, and left few fears for her sake in any bosom but her own.

She was in a remarkable measure devoted to the Word of God. Her extraordinary memory faithfully stored with its rich treasure in early youth, vividly retained the chief part of it through life. The Psalmody of Dr. Watts, her favourite author in that department, she had almost wholly at her command. And with the Commentary of the inimitable Matthew Henry, a Latin and a French Bible, and a Harmony of the Gospels at her side, she daily and most devoutly searched the Scriptures. Clarke on the Promises, was also a favourite book, especially in her last days; and the Pilgrim's Progress was her companion to the "water's edge," where her *real* visions of the celestial city enabled her to lay the sweet Dreamer by, as the Parting Pilgrim did his crutches, when on the bank of the river he saw "chariots of fire" to bear him to the *Pearly Gates*. Her diligence in studying the Bible, without in the least degree neglecting her domestic duties, (and even in the days of her feeblest health,) was truly wonderful. When a subject specially interested her, she compiled and collated all the leading passages of the Bible upon it; often writing them out at great length, and preserving them for reference on future occasions. Indeed, so far did she carry her inte-

rested inquiries into the various parts of the Old and New Testament, and especially into the life of Christ, that she drew out a harmony of the Gospels with her own hand; the better to confirm her knowledge of the true order and relation of the events of his history.

She was a most faithful hearer of the preaching of the Gospel. Her luminous face cheered the progress of the herald of the Lord, and marked the deep measure of her personal interest in the message from the skies. Since her decease, we have found numerous briefs of sermons which she had heard at different periods of her life, from those whom she most admired. Some of these were delivered by Dr. James P. Wilson, and some by her father, others by Dr. Green, but chiefly by the venerable and honoured friend whose tribute to her memory is affixed to this Memoir. He was undoubtedly her most esteemed instructor from the sacred desk. His inimitable simplicity, vivacity, richness, and force of truth, always carried her understanding and her affections along with him; and those appeals which were most searching and simple, were most treasured and admired.

To her refined and candid spirit, nothing was more detestable than religious parade. As it is intimated in the former chapter, it sometimes served to repel her from things and people that were good, but savoured of religious cant. She was especially shocked with the numberless and painful examples

of female impropriety in this way, which our age has disclosed. But in all the appropriate walks of Christian females, and in every becoming expression of their feelings and influence, though diffident of herself, she promptly took her part. Perhaps her most cherished occupation in the service of others, was that of a Sunday-school teacher. Here she rejoiced in the work of her hands. Here, without indelicacy or pretension, she could use the word of God, in his house, and on his day, to teach the little children, whom like her Lord, she so much loved to take in her arms and bless. She had for this service uncommon adaptation in the vivacity of her mind, in the charm of her manner, and especially in the rich store of her Biblical knowledge. She continued this relation after she became a wife, and a mother; and the tenderness of a Christian mother's love seemed to be transferred to the little commonwealth of the Sabbath-school.

We shall never forget the animation and delight with which she communicated to us, two years before her decease, the account of a visit which had been paid her very recently, by a highly respectable young gentleman, then attached to a learned profession, the son of a distinguished public man, who had been a member of her Sunday-school class in Princeton, fifteen years before!

HER DEDICATION TO THE WORK OF FOREIGN MISSIONS.

It was not long after the first experience (as was hoped) of the grace of God in her heart, that the relation was formed between herself and the writer of these pages, which, by its consummation and close, became in succession the crowning joy and the absorbing sorrow of his life.

While this interesting event, combined with other causes, was made the occasion (from an excess perhaps of delicacy on her part) of retarding her public profession of religion, it led to an early and very decisive trial of her Christian principles in another form. At this time the friend whom she so much honoured by her affection, was devoted to the work of Foreign Missions; and he had solicited her hand with the distinct expression, both to herself and her venerable parents, of such a purpose. This necessarily called her to consider the question of a personal engagement in this work. She met and decided this question with a promptitude and nobleness of Christian resolution which surprised even those who knew her best; and though in the providence of God she was spared the expected trial of separation for life from her family and country, yet the unreserved dedication of herself to the Missionary cause which her Redeemer enabled her to make, gave elevation to her Christian character, and prepared her for

the trials scarcely less severe to which she was called in the domestic field. It was on the ground of her having thus dedicated herself, that with so much self-oblivion, and even cheerfulness, she encountered the many difficulties of which we are now to speak.

HER SACRIFICES FOR THE CHURCH OF GOD.

By a train of events over which we had no control, and in the interpretation of which we were permitted to enjoy the direction of the Church, (it would be needless to recite them here,) we were hindered from indulging the desire to "go far hence to the Gentiles." But the *principle* of dedication for life was settled; and hence it was from the first, understood and acted on at all times, that other things being equal, the field at home in which there was opportunity to do most for the conversion of the heathen, was always to be preferred, if offered by the Lord of the harvest. Her first and second settlements could scarcely be considered as giving occasion to many *sacrifices*. Lexington, Kentucky, was in the bosom of her husband's native state. There, in the garden of America, surrounded by a great circle of the most affectionate kindred and friends, and in a city remarkable as the Athens of the west for its refinement and general intelligence, and connected with a most kind and worthy congregation, Mrs. B. felt, that even separation from

the home of her youth, was a form of trial so softened by her circumstances, that it was converted into a mercy.

In our removal to the interesting and important city of Baltimore, we felt that goodness and mercy followed us, changing our abode, but augmenting the number of our friends, and opening to us new and effectual doors of usefulness. Her attachment was very strong to both cities; she left each with regret; but still referring the decision to others in whose wisdom and affection she confided, she cheerfully obeyed their successive summons to depart. It was in leaving the latter city that her sacrifices for the Church more especially commenced. At this eventful period, (the summer of 1831,) it was found that there were more than one thousand congregations in the Presbyterian Church without a pastor, not to mention the immeasurable destitution of the heathen world. To supply this immense demand required, in addition to the very inadequate means already in use, a greatly enlarged and quickened effort of the entire Church. This necessity was deeply felt by the General Assembly of 1831, and led to the re-organization by that body of its Board of Education. In the solemn providence of God, the writer of these sketches was called to fill the office of Corresponding Secretary and General Agent for that Institution. He found it impossible to resist what appeared to be the voice of God speaking through

his Church; though in yielding to it he was constrained to dissolve forever the sacred tie which bound him to a beloved people, and to pass from the endearments of domestic and Pastoral life, to incessant toil and travel in the wide and homeless world. She foresaw, and with keen anticipation felt, all the trouble which such a step must bring upon herself and her little household. But the decision of all her friends, excepting the kind people we were about to leave, was in favour of removal. She remembered her Missionary vows. She saw in it the sweetness as well as the severity of the cross, and without a murmur meekly bowed to the burden of the Lord. In this service, which continued for nearly five years, she shared; and like an angel, soothed the trials of the work. The comforts of domestic life were almost annihilated, either by incessant separations, or the nameless discomforts of a constant absence from home. During one entire year her house was occupied by her but *six weeks*, the rest being spent in hotels, and boarding houses, and steamboats, and stages, with occasional intervals of repose in the bosom of related or attached families scattered through the wide field of her visits from the Mississippi to the Hudson. Yet never did woman shine with more lovely lustre at home; never was woman more indisposed to step from this, her undisputed and delightful empire, into the confusion and folly of this selfish and evil world. Yet did she give up

all, and consent to erect her domestic altar in the wilderness, and gather her little fold on the highway, for Jesus' sake. When weary of a year of travel, undertaken to shun a year of separation, she returned to occupy and order her solitary home. There she was constrained, though both tender and inexperienced, "to guide her house" alone; and to receive her husband only as an occasional visitant. Still, she never murmured; nor would we complain. But faithful history—now that she rests from her labours, requires this narrative; and God permits the record of "*those works which follow*" such "*as die in the Lord.*" Thus, for five years, were kept up the alternations of these affecting trials. They were relieved, it must devoutly be acknowledged, by the unremitting attentions of those kind and lovely families in Philadelphia, whose virtues bound them to us by better ties than those of earthly kindred—as "Zion's friends, and ours;" whose reward we will not attempt to take out of a Saviour's hands by our poor praises; and whose displeasure we shall only then be sure of incurring, when we attempt to unveil to the public eye, the authors of so much disinterested and untiring goodness. The same reference is due to very many families in the city of New York, in which, for several successive years, she passed the winters with her husband. He who thus imperfectly attempts to record his gratitude, knew her worth so well, that he cannot wonder that such friends

should love her; and he feels it his duty here to say, that any portion of success in the work herein referred to, is under God, largely owing, not only to her influence on his labours, but to the charm which she threw upon every circle with which she mingled, and the interest she kindled in all the persons and objects which interested her. When, at the end of two years, he felt overwhelmed with the review of her domestic trials, and was strongly moved to abandon a work which made them inevitable, *she* earnestly resisted the thought of change; and with generous self-devotion urged her husband forward in a work which, though painful to her feelings, was in her view useful to the Church, and pleasing to its glorious Head. As her impressions were those of all her friends, and apparently of the Church at large, and as the Board itself kindly relaxed some of the severer features of our trials, we were confirmed in the conviction that it was our duty to persevere, lest we should incur the divine displeasure, "*by being weary in well-doing.*"

When, however, the indications of divine Providence in the spring of 1835 seemed plainly to say, that our work for the Board of Education was done, and that we ought to enter the door opened for us at Princeton, she was the last to see the duty of a removal; and though her parental home was there, and though her heart and her wearied nature cried aloud for rest, she would not allow any reasons for the change, to be drawn from her

wishes or her sacrifices, and to the last, rather *submitted* to, than *heartily approved* of, the new relation.

But how deep are the ways of God! Scarcely had she time to establish herself in her new home at Princeton,* when another and loud call to an agency, directly in behalf of *Foreign Missions*, was pressed upon us. Though at this period her health had become evidently far more delicate, she heard and heeded again the voice of her Saviour; and still recalling the Missionary vow, offered herself again a willing sacrifice on the altar of God. In deciding this momentous question (in the winter of 1838, after having spent but eighteen months in Princeton, nearly half of which was occupied by her husband in active agency in behalf of the funds, library, &c. of the Theological Seminary,)

* It is at once a remarkable indication of the nobleness of those Philadelphia friends already named, and of the extent to which her worth and her sacrifices were appreciated, that on being informed of our final purpose to remove to Princeton, they united in the purchase of a commodious dwelling, which was presented to Mrs. Breckinridge and her children. It is true, one object in view was, the accommodation of the Professor (for the time) of Pastoral Theology and Missionary instruction in the Seminary. But the terms of the gift are specific; and when we attempted to alter the direction of this munificent testimonial, so as to make it the *property of the Institution*, it was peremptorily declined; and the deed was drawn in the name of Margaret Breckinridge and her children.

we found ourselves incapable of being instrumental in recalling her *still again* to the commotion, desertion at home, and incessant cares, of another agency. Three months therefore were given to the important work, and the offer of the office finally declined. Even here however, she persisted in referring the decision to *public relations* alone, leaving all personal considerations out of view. And though fast approaching her end (what at that time none of us knew) she spontaneously put herself at the disposal of the friends of the Board of Foreign Missions, for her part of any service which might be required of her husband. whether it was in extensive journeys with him, or separation from him, or a winter's sojourn with him and her children in the city of New York. For the first, hoping it might invigorate her health. she was actually furnished; and when that was abandoned for the last, she repaired, with the spirit of her Master in her heart, to meet the trials it induced. It was in the fresh recollection of the parting scene, on her way thither, that the following sentences were addressed to the writer by the Rev. Dr. Alexander.

"I cannot conclude, without a word to dear Mrs. Breckinridge. I admire her ready submission to the calls of Providence. For although she cannot help dropping the silent tear, she makes no complaint, but shuts up her comfortable house. leaves her home and her friends, and as cheerfully as she *can*, goes to live in a hotel. and among

strangers. Well, she shall not lose her reward. For these sacrifices she shall have rich compensation: and our sweetest earthly pleasure is in doing the will of our Heavenly Father." (Dated Princeton, December 17th, 1837.)

At the close of the winter we returned to Princeton, hoping that now God would grant us a little rest in that quiet village and that delightful home, where not "*unaware we entertained an angel.*" But ah! this blessedness was not long intended for us. Having done her work, (though still we did not fear it,) she was soon to be taken to her rest and her reward on high.

HER LAST SICKNESS AND DEATH.

Her last sickness was of a protracted and very interesting character. When she returned from New York, she was delicate and her state of health was mysterious, but not yet alarming even to her physicians. Very soon after this, she had a violent attack, which in a short season prostrated her frame, and, disclosing a peculiar complication of diseases, overwhelmed every mind in the family, but her own, (she was calm,) with the most gloomy apprehensions of her danger.

At the close of the winter term of the Theological Seminary, (May first,) it was our anxious desire to take her to the Red Sulphur Springs in Virginia. But it was too early in the season; and being yet doubtful, whether this or that place would be useful or hurtful, it was agreed by her

physicians to indulge her strongly expressed wish to try the waters of Saratoga. Thither therefore we went, pausing only a short time in the city of New York for medical consultation.

At this time, she was a most interesting object to all who saw her. Her debility was so extreme that she was borne from place to place in the arms of her husband, which, from her delicate frame, it was easy to do. The gentleness and patience with which she endured her sickness, the inimitable moral beauty of her countenance, and the general expression of frailty mingled with grace, excited the deepest interest wherever she passed.*

At Saratoga we spent a very quiet season of three weeks, (before the great hotels were opened, or the crowds had arrived) at the house of a most kind and deserving Christian woman, Mrs. Taylor, whose unceasing attentions greatly conduced to soothe sufferings which God had pleased should not be arrested. During this visit she used the waters freely, as a beverage, and in the bath, with no apparent *injury*, except that it evidently dis-

* There is poetic beauty in the Stanza of Southey's on the portrait of Bishop Heber, written after his decease; and though fanciful it is striking. Blessed be God our Redeemer, we have surer marks of recognition in the heavenly world.

"They too, will gaze
Upon his effigy
With reverential love,
Till they shall grow familiar with its lines
And know him when they see his face in heaven."

closed the fatal symptoms of her malady. She was able almost every day, to take gentle rides in the open air, and frequently to mingle with the family. But her chamber was her sanctuary. There she reclined, feeding on the Word of God. She was especially delighted with Clarke on the Promises. During that season of seclusion, she seemed to grow in grace with a progress which surprised (while it delighted) us; for we knew not then how near she was to the perfection of the heavenly rest. But it has since been interpreted to us, by the event, as one of God's peculiar mercies. What made this the more pleasing evidence of grace was, that she did not know her own danger. It was the power of religion poured upon her spirit by Him who was "hastening to make her up among his jewels." At one time, she said—"Oh, yes, pray that the *distance* between God and me may be taken away." And after uniting, with the most affecting solemnity and tenderness in the prayer which was offered, she at its close expressed *aloud* her joy in the exercise, (a thing most unusual with her) and her delight in God her Saviour, who *draweth nigh.* On another occasion, after hearing some of the promises of *healing* to the body, as collected by Clarke, she seemed for a moment to be musing, she then gently said: "My dear———I am like the poor woman who had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any; but rather grew worse. *My hope is in the Great Physician!*"

Since we have been calm enough to review the various stages of her last sickness in relation to her religious exercises, it has been a subject of deep regret, and of no little self-reproach, that we had not made the attempt at recording, as they were uttered, some of the deeply affecting expressions of her Christian principles and feelings. But the tumultuous hour of hope and fear, and hurried, anxious watching at the bed of death, is not the time for cool calculation. Some of the most affecting parts of such scenes are incapable of being written down, even by one not interested in the sufferer. Nay, more—like the voices which John heard from heaven in Patmos, the Spirit seems to say of them, "*write them not.*" These are "joys with which the stranger intermeddleth not." (Prov. xiv. 10.) It is a sanctuary which no creature can enter. And then our beloved Friend, who was often afraid to whisper her religious joys to her Saviour, lest she should be found offering "strange fire" on his altar, seldom talked of her hopes, (though often of her sins,) to her nearest friends; and never, by *writing them* down, put it in the power of posthumous publications to expose them to the view of others. We can only, therefore, illustrate her religious character, at the stage which we now approach, by broken fragments of thoughts and feelings, caught from her lips amidst the awful mercies of a dying hour.

She began at length, visibly to sink, when Dr.

Freeman, of Balston, whose skilful and kind attentions she enjoyed, (Dr. Steel, of Saratoga, having himself been recently removed by death,) strongly advised a discontinuance of the use of the waters, and an attempt to reach the Red Sulphur Springs. For now the prevailing type of the disease had become distinctly pulmonary; and the skill of physicians, and the healing waters, and all the help of man were vain. Now, for the first time, we began to discern the dread reality of her approaching dissolution; and had some foretaste of the *first* anguish of such a loss.*

With heavy hearts, but hastened steps, we re-

* The following touching stanzas do more real honour to their illustrious author, (Lord Palmerston) than all the distinctions of his high rank and public life.

Whoe'er, like me, with trembling anguish brings
His dearest earthly treasure to these springs;
Whoe'er, like me, to soothe distress and pain,
Shall court these salutary springs in vain:
Condemn'd, like me, to hear the faint reply,
To mark the fading cheek, the sinking eye—
From the chill brow to wipe the damps of death,
And watch in dumb despair the short'ning breath:—
If chance should bring him to this humble line,
Let the sad mourner know his pangs were mine.
Ordain'd to lose the partner of my breast,
Whose virtues warm'd me, and whose beauty bless'd;
Fram'd ev'ry tie that binds the heart to prove,
Her duty friendship, and her friendship love.
But yet, remembering that the parting sigh
Appoints the just to slumber, not to die,
The starting tear I check'd—I kissed the rod,
And not to earth resigned her, but to God!

turned to Princeton; whence almost in despair, yet anxious to try any and all means for so great an end, we hastily set out with our meek sufferer for the Virginia Springs: but as the previous narrative has recited, we were arrested at Philadelphia. Here all was done by the assiduity and skill of her physicians,* and the most tender and constant attentions of a great number of friends. But her divine Redeemer claimed her for himself. She returned to Princeton, to bless her household, and to die. On the evening of June the 13th, she reached her children, and her earthly home. On the morning of the 16th, a quarter before ten o'clock, with her reason unclouded, in a frame of calm and holy triumph which marked the dawning of heaven on her soul; with a meek prayer for permission to die, and with but a single pang, she bade the world farewell, and ascended to God!

Her remains were attended to the grave by a very large and deeply affected assembly, after the delivery of the impressive funeral discourse affixed to this Memoir; where they rest by the side of her three little children, two daughters and a son, removed by death before. The like number and of the same sex, two daughters and a son, are left to the surviving parent, to mourn her loss, to trea-

* Drs. Chapman and Meigs, to whom with Dr. Nelson of New York, we all owe more for their unwearied and sympathizing care than we have words to express.

sure and imitate her example, and, by the grace of the Saviour, to follow them to the skies, where the "house now left desolate unto them" shall be restored with added bliss; and the little family thus divided in the midst of life, being reunited in pure and perfect love, be received into everlasting habitations.

A neat marble monument points to the spot where her dust reposes.

CHAPTER III.

CLOSING REFLECTIONS.

THUS it has pleased our Heavenly Father to "take away from us the desire of our eyes, with a stroke." The first impression of such a loss is that of *amazement*—overwhelming and bewildering the soul, and with strange horror, destroying for a time, the power to feel. "Deep calleth unto deep—all thy waves, and billows have gone over me." Such is the abyss of grief! At such a time, our part is "to be still"—sitting, like the Marys, "over against the sepulchre."

When the disciples of John lost their earthly Master, "they came and took the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus." This ought to be the first act of every mourner, *to tell it unto Jesus*. With him we shall find both sympathy and support. And more than this: He resolves the death of our friends into his own gracious sovereignty, when he calls it, "the coming of the Son of Man." Death loses its terror when it becomes his act of grace. "The death of his saints is precious in his sight," and is always ordered with a supreme regard to their blessedness, and his glory. So that the feeblest of his dying children may con-

fidently say, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me."

There is a feeling about the death of our friends, which is made up in part of unbelief, and in part of that tender regard which is produced by their dependence on us through life. Those endearing relations which make us their protectors, and supports, send their deep sympathies even into the grave. Who of us that is a husband, or a parent, that does not feel the horror of the separation aggravated by the spectacle of our helpless kindred struggling alone in mortal strife with "the king of terrors"? We, to whom they have always looked for succour, are then as helpless as they, in their extremest need. We cannot even share their agony. It is this which gives a nameless anguish to such a moment.*

But it is because we forget that "when father and mother," and all they most depended on in life, "forsake them, then the Lord doth take them up." The Christian is never so little alone as on the verge of heaven. The Lord of life is there. Underneath are the everlasting arms; and through

* One of the most affecting scenes ever witnessed, was the death of a little child, who, in the last moments, called on her mother *to die with her*. This was the voice of nature. To this call the heart would, but cannot respond. "Here our father and mother must forsake us."

all the terrors of the grave; and above all the tumult of that last hour, the Shepherd's voice is heard, saying—"IT IS I—BE NOT AFRAID." While some pass over Jordan on the wing, and some struggle through the waves, yet all safely pass. Not one of them shall perish, but each appear in Zion before God.

It adds tenderness and force to these consoling hopes, that Jesus once "tasted death himself." It moves us, that "Jesus wept." But it gives a new nature to death, that Jesus died! For while the *merit* of *his* death takes the sting from ours, his presence in the tomb dispels all its terrors. Therefore, since Jesus died, let us consent to death; and surrender at his call those most dear to us.

> The graves of all his saints he blest,
> And softened every bed—
> Where should the dying members rest,
> But with their dying head!

It must be sweet to lie in that grave which he has hallowed by his presence among the dead.

One of the considerations which should make us acquiesce in the removal of our beloved friends who die in the Lord, is this—that we are suffering for their sakes; and that they could not be blessed without our sufferings. For their death, (the dread cause of all our grief,) was necessary to their perfect and eternal blessedness. This thought

ought to soften every pang. If we really love them, and if our sacrifices for them while they were here below, were the fruit of our love, then we have only to remember that this is one prolonged, supreme sacrifice for their sakes.—This reflection if properly pursued, would often turn our mourning into gladness.* And then, if this weight of sorrow that is laid on us may but be duly improved and meekly borne; if it may not only mark the bliss of our friends begun on high, but be made by a wise and good God conducive to our growth in grace—it will have in it the pledge of our everlasting re-union in heaven; and thus be an affliction doubly blessed.

But the silencing, yea, elevating thought of all is, that it is *for Jesus' sake*, we are called to suffer. "*The Master* is come and called for her." It is indeed the richest of our earthly treasures. Our own life were a far lighter offering. But for that reason we honour him the more. It is our *Isaac*

* A lovely example of the power of this sentiment in subduing grief, is given in the narrative of one of our American missionaries. He and his fellow-labourer were alone in a barbarous land, far away from any creature who cared for their Lord or for them. Suddenly his friend was taken from him. In that awful moment of desertion and anguish, after commending the parting soul to God, and closing the eyes of the dead, *he kissed his cold lips, and thought*, "*What glory has already burst upon his view!*" In this thought his sorrow was lost.

that God calls for; and it is then indeed we honour God when we can *offer* like Abraham. We shall receive the offering back, if not as soon, as certainly—and at no distant day! When, therefore, He who laid down his life for us, asks for our richest gift, let us not call him a hard master, but give without a murmur.

The death of our friends should have the effect of bringing Heaven nearer to us. We ought to cultivate, if we may so speak, *domestic* views of that blessed world to which we are so much honoured as to have sent up angels from our households. While all superstitious emotions are carefully to be quelled, we are permitted to draw very nigh to them. We may cherish their image in our memories and hearts; we still belong to the same great communion—and all are members of that body of which Jesus is the head. "As death does not separate from the Lord, neither does it divide the saints from one another. Our spirit and theirs daily meet at the one throne—they to praise, we to pray; therefore, in that sense, though we are absent in body, we are present in spirit."

And the distance which lies between them and us is daily growing less. How swiftly we travel, yea, fly, in all the speed of time! It may not be an inappropriate close to these meditations, to insert the family hymn, with which the remnant of a bereaved household often close the day, and com-

fort each others' hearts, at the hour when we feel most desolate.

Come let us join our friends above,
That have obtained the prize;
And on the eagle wings of love,
To joy celestial rise.

Let saints below his praises sing,
With those to glory gone;
For all the servants of our King,
In heaven and earth are one.

One family, we dwell in him,
One church above, beneath:
Though now divided by the stream,
The narrow stream of death.

One army of the living God,
To his commands we bow;
Part of the host have crossed the flood,
And part are crossing now.

Ten thousand to their endless home,
This solemn moment fly;
And we are to the margin come,
And soon expect to die.

Dear Saviour, be our constant guide,
Then when the word is given,
Bid the cold waves of death divide,
And land us safe in heaven.

And now, in bringing to a close these very imperfect notices of a beloved saint of God, it is proper to say, that much more might truly have been added in reference to many points of her character, that would have been proper, and interesting: as for example, her intellectual endowments; her extensive acquirements; her domestic

life; her personal accomplishments. But we fear to indulge our feelings. Nor is it needful. For it was her Christian character mainly which we designed to illustrate. Her love for the Redeemer, and her sacrifices for his sake, were the jewels which adorned her on earth, and which lose not their lustre in death. It was the glory of all those qualities which so eminently fitted her to attract the admiration of this world, that she meekly laid them at the Saviour's feet. There also, we desire to leave this humble tribute to one whose "sun went down while it was yet day," praying that he who thus early fitted her for heaven, may by these poor means prolong her usefulness, and bless her memory on earth.

SUBMISSION:

A SERMON

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF

MRS. MARGARET BRECKINRIDGE.

BY THE

REV. A. ALEXANDER, D.D

SERMON.

PSALM XLVI. 10.

"Be still, and know that I am God."

OMITTING all critical discussion of the true import of the text, I will consider the words as addressed by Jehovah to his own people, when suffering affliction under the strokes of his mighty hand. It may be considered as the language of authority; or of consolation. According to the first view, it is as if the Almighty had said, "Be still, and neither repine, nor rebel, for your affliction comes not from the dust, but from me, your rightful Sovereign; to whom you owe absolute subjection." If viewed in the sense last mentioned, then it will be as though God, feeling compassion towards his afflicted saints, puts them in mind of the sure refuge which they had in him; as if he had said, "Be calm and unruffled, in the midst of all your overwhelming calamities, for I am able to sustain you, and to deliver you by my Almighty arm." "Be still, and know that I am God." In either case, the result, as to our duty, is the same. Unreserved submission is the thing enjoined, and the reason to enforce the injunction is, "*I am God.*"

"Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth as a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not. His days are determined: the number of his years are with thee; thou hast appointed his bounds, that he cannot pass." No condition in this life is exempt from trouble. No bulwarks can be erected by kings and princes, strong enough, and high enough, to be a safeguard against the shafts of adversity. In regard to this matter, the rich and the poor stand very much upon a level. "Man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward." Hence, this life has justly been denominated, "the vale of tears." Uninterrupted bliss cannot be found beneath the skies. The righteous are not exempt, but many are their afflictions. Besides a participation in the common lot of humanity, they have troubles peculiar to themselves. The dispensations of God towards his own people, are, indeed, in covenant love and faithfulness, but they are not calculated to encourage them to take up their rest in this world, but to render their path so thorny, and their bed so uneasy, that they are continually admonished of their duty to set their affections on things above, and to press forward as pilgrims to the possession of their heavenly inheritance.

The reasons which should persuade us to exercise unreserved and uncomplaining submission to the will of God, as manifested in the dispensations

of his wise and righteous Providence, are at the same time obvious and weighty. But, here, as in other cases, theory and practice are very different things. On this subject, we all can teach and inculcate what is right; but when it becomes necessary to practise our own lessons, we experience a sad deficiency. This is a school in which, sooner or later, we must all be learners; and it behoves us to use diligence in preparing ourselves to endure trials with fortitude, and cheerfully to acquiesce in those painful events, which we cannot avoid. Some persons, when overtaken by severe strokes of adversity, are, like the bullock unaccustomed to the yoke, restive and rebellious; they resist the hand which presses them, and struggle to throw off the yoke. Such a course is altogether unwise, and must be unsuccessful. "Wo to him that striveth with his Maker. Let the potsherds strive with the potsherds of the earth," but let not a feeble, sinful worm rise up in rebellion against the Almighty; for who hath hardened himself against him and hath prospered? And when there is no open rebellion, there is often a spirit of discontent and murmuring, which, though smothered in the breast, partakes of the nature of rebellion, and is the very opposite of cordial, filial submission. Every degree of this temper, whether concealed or expressed, is exceedingly offensive to God, as we learn from his word, and is so far from mitigating the evils which we suffer, that it

doubles their pressure; it makes even a light burthen intolerable.

Others again, endeavour to form habits of hardy insensibility; they seek refuge from the keen arrows of affliction, in a stoical indifference. They affect to contemn, as weak, and wanting in fortitude, all those who seem to suffer exquisitely under the strokes of adversity. Much practical progress never can be made in this unnatural system. Whatever men may profess or pretend, nature will assert her claims, and if her feelings may be for a season suspended, she will again resume her sway; and indeed the equanimity acquired by these principles, has been more in appearance than reality; and the greatest adepts in eradicating the susceptibilities of our nature, have only learned the art of successfully concealing the emotions of their bosoms from the observation of others.

But while some endeavour to obtain relief by rendering themselves insensible to the calamities of life, and aim at braving the storms of adversity, there are others, who err on the opposite extreme. Under the chastising hand of God, they are prostrated in the dust; not in humility, but in despondency; their sorrow not only casts them down, but overwhelms them. They find themselves sinking in deep waters, where there is no standing. Such persons not only put away all hope, but cease from all exertion, and abandon themselves to grief; forgetting the exhortation which speaketh

unto them as to children, "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him."

There is but one effectual remedy for the evils to which man is heir, while on his earthly pilgrimage; and that is RELIGION—true religion, not merely apprehended and approved in its theory, but deeply felt, and cordially embraced in the inmost soul. This is the only principle of sufficient potency to tranquillize the perturbations of the soul when deeply afflicted. This only can sustain the mind, ready to sink into despair. This furnishes the only medicine which heals the anguish of the broken heart; the only balm which relieves the wounds made in the spirit by painful bereavements. Here the superlative value of true religion is realized; and this principle of heavenly origin is found to possess a power, not only to sustain the soul under the heaviest pressure of affliction, but to pour sweet consolations into the desolate and troubled heart. Here, indeed, is opened a fountain of refreshing streams, in the midst of this dreary wilderness, of which the poor heathen had no knowledge, and of which the men of the world are still ignorant.

These blessed effects of genuine piety are not produced by any irrational process, or blind impulse; but by the contemplation of truths adapted to the end. Consolations which do not rest on this firm foundation, will ever be found precarious,

and commonly evanescent. Buoyant hope and cheerful resignation must have the solid pillar of truth on which to repose. It will therefore be consonant to our present purpose, to bring more distinctly into view, some of those important doctrines, the practical belief of which leads to the exercise of Christian submission.

That which lies at the foundation of the whole, is, that God exists, and governs all events by his providence. Whatever men profess, or speculatively believe, as it relates to the actual presence and operative providence of God, there is undoubtedly much practical atheism in the hearts of men. Most feel and act as if there was no God, and as if all things happened by chance. This is remarkably manifest when they are suddenly cast down into deep affliction. They recognise not the hand that smites them. They seem to think, that affliction cometh from the dust, and that trouble springeth out of the ground. In all their bitter lamentations, their views extend no farther than to the proximate causes of their distress; and they often experience the bitterest regret, because they did not pursue a different course, or make use of different means from what they did; although with the knowledge possessed, they could not have done better. Under the same short-sighted views, they are prone to censure others who have had an innocent instrumentality in bringing about the events by which they are distressed. All this

arises from the want of faith in Divine Providence; and too much of this unbelief cleaves to the pious themselves, and greatly aggravates their calamities. But when their faith in the being and providence of God is strong, they see his hand in every thing good and evil, which occurs; they behold him operating through all nature, and giving efficacy to all second causes; and are as fully persuaded that he directs the fall of a sparrow, as the overthrew of a kingdom. This doctrine of an universal and particular Providence, is the foundation of our trust in God, for security and sustenance. How beautifully did Christ teach this lesson to his disciples, when he said, "Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"

When the dark and cloudy day of adversity, or the long and tempestuous night comes upon us—when our comforts are suddenly blasted, and our brightest earthly prospects are obscured, then, instead of repining or desponding, we should be-

take ourselves to the doctrine of an overruling Providence. The dispensation may be dark, and afflictive, and even profoundly mysterious; yet we should think, it is God that hath done it. These are his footsteps. This is the operation of his hand. He it is, "who formeth the light and createth the darkness; that maketh peace, and createth evil." The more, in such circumstances, we look beyond all creatures, and second causes, and fix our thoughts and our faith, on God alone, the sooner shall we find composure of mind. If we fully believe that God is in the storm, and that it is his voice which is heard in the thunder, and his face which is seen in the flashing of the lightning, the less shall we be terrified with the apprehension of unknown dangers.

But we are permitted to know not only that God governs all human affairs by his Providence, but also that his dispensations, as it relates to his own people, are all ordered in wisdom, in faithfulness, and in love. The doctrine of Providence can bring no true consolation to any who are unreconciled to God. They may know that it is his rod by which they are smitten, but they cannot tell but his strokes are those of vindicatory justice, and only a prelude to more intolerable pains. Before we can repose with confidence and comfort on the faithfulness, wisdom, and goodness of the Divine dispensations, we must possess some evidence that our sins are pardoned and our per-

sons accepted; for the more perfect the Divine government, the more certainly will punishment pursue the guilty. Our cheerful resignation to the afflictions of life, is therefore, closely connected with our justification through the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ. While we contemplate our own sins and imperfections only, we can entertain no other feeling, than a fearful looking for of wrath; but when with the spirit of adoption we can look up to our heavenly Father's reconciled face, we need not be alarmed nor cast down, under the heaviest afflictions which befall us. We know that he doth not willingly afflict his beloved children, but out of love chastises them for their greater good, that they may become in a higher degree, partakers of his holiness. They are assured, therefore, that all these painful events shall be so overruled, as to work for their good. And the Holy Scriptures clearly teach, that although these chastisements are, for the present, not joyous, but grievous, yet, hereafter, they will produce in them who are exercised thereby, the peaceable fruits of righteousness. They eminently conduce to wean the affections from this vain world, to humble the spirit in the dust under a sense of unworthiness, and to excite an ardent spirit of prayer. It is, moreover, by a severe but salutary discipline of this kind, that saints are made meet for the heavenly inheritance. And not only so, but these temporary afflictions, somehow

or other, will have a direct efficiency in increasing their future felicity and glory, according to that remarkable declaration of Paul, "These light afflictions which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." It is not surprising, therefore, that God who loves his people with an unchangeable love, should visit them with the rod. It is the method which he takes to purge out their dross and their tin. Affliction is therefore compared to a furnace, in which the precious metals are assayed and purified. Thus Peter comforts suffering Christians in his time:

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." Again: "That the trial of your faith being much more precious than gold that purifieth though it be tried with fire, might be found unto peace, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

In the testimony just cited, there is another interesting reason suggested for the affliction of Christ's disciples. And it is one which must be touching to the hearts of all who truly love their Lord. It is, that as he was pre-eminently "the man of sorrows," there is a congruity in their participating in suffering, that in this respect, as in

others, they may be conformed to his example. Paul also makes express and repeated mention of the same thing. "If children, then heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified together." He speaks of this communion with Christ in suffering, as a characteristic of discipleship, and as a high privilege, "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus."—"For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." Christians, therefore, in primitive times, gloried in their severest sufferings. And now, no consideration is more efficacious in fortifying the believer against fainting than the idea of the sufferings of Christ for us. It would seem that they who have been privileged to endure nothing for Christ's sake, would scarcely be admitted to reign with him in glory.

And as we should endeavour, while in the world, to glorify God to the utmost of our power, by letting the light of a holy example shine forth, so there is no situation in which piety appears to greater advantage, than when exercised in deep affliction. What disposition can be conceived as possessing more moral beauty, than the grace enjoined in our text; *cheerful, quiet submission to the will of our heavenly Father*, under the heaviest pressure of his hand. And as we all are conscious that there is yet much impurity and

dross cleaving to our nature, we should rejoice in being subjected to a process, though it be a fiery one, by which we might be more and more purified from sin. Indeed, we cannot do without this salutary discipline: our salvation, probably, depends upon our sufferings as a means of conservation in a state of grace. We ought not, therefore, "to think it strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try us, as though some strange thing happened to us; but should rather rejoice, inasmuch as we are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, we may be glad with exceeding joy."

"Be still, and know that I am God." Be calm and submissive; be not alarmed nor perturbed; let your resignation to the Divine will be unreserved and cheerful. Seize the occasion, which severe afflictions offer, to show your entire willingness that God should govern and dispose of you and yours according to his own sovereign will. He is wise, and knows how to order every thing for the best. He is powerful, and can bring light out of darkness, and good out of evil. He is faithful, and will certainly fulfil all his gracious promises. He is good and merciful, and will consult the best interests of his children in all his dealings towards them; and even those events which seem to be most adverse, he will so temper and overrule, that ultimately, and relatively, they will be made to work for their good.

Under sore and unexpected bereavements, the human heart will bleed; and the susceptible feelings will be lacerated, and the gush of sorrow will have its course; but grace comes in and suggests considerations which ought to moderate our grief; and to teach us to be quietly submissive to the hand of the Almighty. It is a blessed state, when the feelings of the man are absorbed in the nobler feelings of the Christian; when our will is swallowed up in the will of God. What He doeth we know not now, but we shall know hereafter. It will not be long until we shall be able to see, "that he hath done all things well."

In the recent mournful dispensation of Divine Providence, we see how many hearts may be wounded, and how many joys withered, by a single stroke. In this interesting group of mourners, we behold the aged parents weeping over the lifeless body of a much loved, and very lovely daughter. They have lived to witness the premature departure of one, whom they might naturally have expected to be a comfort to them in their declining years, and to wipe from their foreheads the cold drops, in a dying hour. Parental bereavements admit of less alleviation, than others, from earthly considerations. The friends and comforts which, late in life, we lose, we cannot hope to have made up to us. And, sometimes, the parents of a numerous offspring are preserved so long, that they survive all, or most of their children; and they

stand, like aged trees, which, by successive storms, have been stripped of their foliage and branches. But, although bereaved parents cannot draw much consolation, under their afflictions, from this world; yet the rich consolations of the Gospel are accessible to them, and peculiarly appropriate to their condition. The pious do not know how to appreciate the promises of God rightly, until, in the hour of affliction, they are made to experience their power and sweetness. We cannot blame these parents for mourning the loss of a first born and very amiable daughter; but we trust that they now find support and comfort in that God on whose Almighty arm they have long trusted. They have not now for the first time, to learn the riches of that grace which is treasured up in Christ Jesus; and may they be enabled to come now to that fountain of mercy, by the streams of which they have been so often refreshed and comforted, under former trials!

The grief of affectionate brothers and sisters also, flows this day, in a strong current. They feel as if a part of themselves had been taken away; and yet they can scarcely realize the extent of their calamity. It often requires time for grief to become rooted in the soul. The first gush of sorrow from the bleeding heart, is indeed a more sensible emotion, but the full value of our loss is not felt, until after serious reflection. It is a painful thing to be separated from those around

whom our earliest and tenderest affections were entwined. The thought of never again, in this world, seeing a face, from which always the most benignant affections beamed upon us, cannot but leave a melancholy and heart-sinking impression. Who can adequately describe the anguish produced by the sudden severance of hearts, long cemented in the bands of the tenderest affection! But, though nature will be obeyed, and the floods of sorrow cannot be altogether restrained, yet there is a Christian duty incumbent on those placed in these circumstances. The command does not say, that we should not weep, but that we should not sorrow as those that have no hope. Christians are not divested of the common sensibilities of humanity; but they possess principles much higher than mere humanity, by which they moderate their passions, and by which the stream of natural sorrow may be sanctified, and turned into that of "godly sorrow, which worketh a repentance not to be repented of."

But among the weeping mourners, on this sad occasion, I see some, who though deeply affected, can scarcely be supposed capable, on account of their tender age, of estimating the irreparable loss which they have sustained. I call the loss of a mother *irreparable;* because, however many affectionate friends may stand ready to do all in their power to supply a mother's place; yet, the assiduity, forbearance, and tenderness, so requisite in

the treatment of young children, can be expected in perfection from nothing but that affection, which the Creator has deeply implanted in the hearts of mothers. To those who have had long experience in the world, there are few ideas more affecting than that of *a motherless child.* But orphaned, as these dear little ones are, by the loss of one parent, they are, I may say, on this account, more peculiarly the care of a covenant God, whose promise extends not only to believers, but to their seed, and whose kind care extends especially to such children of the faithful, as have been bereaved of one or both parents. These dear children, we confidently trust will be the objects not merely of God's common goodness, but of his special grace; and after spending a life of usefulness in acts of piety and beneficence, will enjoy the blessed privilege of regaining their beloved mother, in the mansions of glory, where sickness, death, and tears, will be known no more.

In addressing the interesting group of mourners now before me, I perceive one, whose griefs are too big for utterance, and whose swelling bosom cannot be soothed, at this time, by any of the common topics of consolation. An officious intrusion into the sacred recess of such indescribable sorrows, only serves to exacerbate, rather than mitigate the wounded spirit. All that the kindest friends can do, in such a case, is to let their warmest, tenderest sympathies fall in with the tide of overwhelming

grief, which rejects all consolation. "Weep with them that weep." There is another thing which we can do, and that far more important, we can pray for our afflicted and bereaved brother. In such circumstances, prayer is almost our only refuge; for all our help must come from God. While the voice of man is powerless to afford relief, there is ONE who causes his voice to be heard even in the midst of the tempest. And his authoritative, his affectionate language to our beloved brother is, "*Be still, and know that I am God.*" "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." It is somewhere related of that eminently pious reformer, Luther, that when he fell into any great trouble, he was wont to say to his friends, "Come, let us sing the forty-sixth psalm."

A striking example of uncomplaining submission we have in the good old priest Eli, who, when informed that God was about to bring such judgments on his house, as would cause the ears of every one that heard them to tingle; meekly replied, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good."

And the patriarch Job, when deprived of all his property, and of all his children, humbled himself and worshipped God, saying—"The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord." "What, shall we receive

good from the hand of the LORD, and shall we not receive evil?"

When Jesus visited the mourning family of Bethany, who were among his dearest friends, he did not say to the afflicted sisters, weep not—but the compassionate Redeemer united his tears with theirs; for it is written, "Jesus wept." These were indeed only the tears of sympathy, for it was in his benevolent purpose to restore the deceased brother to his disconsolate sisters. Here also, we have a striking illustration of the truth, that God's children are ignorant often of his kind designs, when he permits sore afflictions to come upon them; "If thou hadst been here," said both the weeping sisters, "my brother had not died." Their regret was keen, and unmitigated by any known circumstance; but in one short hour, they were, no doubt, glad that their Lord was not there—they rejoiced that their beloved brother had died; because the glory of God and the power of the Redeemer had now been manifested. Indeed, a gracious visit from Jesus will turn our bitterest sorrows into joy. His name—his word—his grace—has a mighty power to calm the swelling surges of overwhelming sorrow. He can say, as he did to the raging storm, "Peace, be still," and there will be a great calm. Were it not for thoughts of God—of his providence, and promises, and of the seasonable and effectual aid of his

grace, grief would often drown the soul in perdition; as it often does work death in the heathen, and in the men of the world, who are without God, and without hope.

It would be in place here to speak of our dear departed sister, whose loss we now mourn; but this task will hereafter be better performed by another hand. And to this audience little need be said; for she was brought up among you from her childhood, and enjoyed the affectionate regards of this community in no common degree, as is manifest by the general and tender sympathy felt on this occasion. By her sweet simplicity, engaging vivacity, affectionate temper, and affable manners, our beloved friend endeared herself to her acquaintances and neighbours, wherever she resided. And in regard to her Christian character, she adorned her profession by a consistent life and conversation, in all the relations which she sustained.

Her latter end was calm and peaceful. She felt some dread of the pangs of dissolution; but in regard to what comes after death, she had no fear—her hope continued firm and her prospects bright to the last moment.

It is always a cause of lively gratitude, when God is pleased to sustain his dear children in passing through "the valley of the shadow of death." It affords to mourning friends the sweetest consolation which could be received under such sore bereavements. This consolation of our

benignant Father has not been withheld in the present instance. Mourning friends are permitted to rejoice in the midst of their overflowing sorrow, in the confident hope, that the departed spirit of our dear sister, free from all sin and pain, rests sweetly in the love and beatified vision of her divine Redeemer.

"BLESSED ARE THE DEAD THAT DIE IN THE LORD, FROM HENCEFORTH; YEA, SAITH THE SPIRIT, THAT THEY MAY REST FROM THEIR LABOURS; AND THEIR WORKS DO FOLLOW THEM."

LETTERS

OF

A GRANDFATHER,

TO THE SURVIVING CHILDREN OF

MRS. MARGARET BRECKINRIDGE.

BY THE

REV. SAMUEL MILLER, D. D.

PART II.

LETTERS

OF

A GRANDFATHER.

LETTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

My Dear Grandchildren: — The decease of your beloved and lamented Mother, has placed both you and me in circumstances of great solemnity and responsibility. To be deprived of a mother's care and counsel at the tender age at which she left you, is indeed a loss which no human arithmetic can estimate; especially to be deprived of *such* a mother, one so well qualified by strength of intellect, by sincere piety, and by peculiar loveliness of character, to be a blessing to you, for time and eternity, is a bereavement of which, even now, I know not how to speak without emotions too strong for utterance. While this precious Parent lived, she seemed to interpose between your beloved grandmother and myself,

and any immediate responsibility in regard to your education; but now that she is removed, we seem to be brought, in the mysterious and mournful Providence of God, to stand in some measure in her place, and to perform some of the most important duties which she owed to her children. And, although your surviving Parent is eminently fitted, both by nature and grace, to be a guide to your youth; yet, as he is engaged, and is likely for some time to be engaged, in active, arduous, and extended labours for the Church of God, which will probably separate him from you often and much for a considerable time;—an additional responsibility on our part seems to grow out of every circumstance.

It is under these impressions that I now address you. Your grandparents are drawing near to the end of their course. They must soon leave you in a depraved and ensnaring world. What they do for your benefit, they must do quickly. As one placed in these tender and endearing relations to you, and in these solemn circumstances, allow me to pour out the fulness of a heart most earnestly engaged for your welfare, and desiring more ardently than I am able to express, to see you walking in truth and happiness, and embalming by your conduct, as well as by your affection, the memory of that blessed Parent, who, if she is ever permitted from her high and holy abode, to look down on those whom she has left behind, will

rejoice to see you making choice of that path which leads to the same blessedness.

There are two considerations, beloved grandchildren, which, I think, you will all agree, entitle me to expect from you a respectful and affectionate attention to what I have to offer in these letters. The *first* is, that I have lived a long and somewhat eventful life; and, of course, my range of *experience* has not been small. In my three-score and tenth year, I have had an opportunity of following many young people from the cradle to the grave. I have seen the training, the subsequent course, and the end of thousands. Need I say, that the lessons derived from such experience are not unworthy of your regard? O, if you could start in your career with that practical knowledge of the vanity, the snares, and the sufferings of the world, which has come to me through the medium of many a melancholy sight, and many a painful conflict, how great would be the advantage! But this cannot be. Happy were it for you, if you were willing to profit as you might from the experience of others. But neither can this be expected, in ordinary cases, to be realized. I cannot, however, admit the thought, that you will be willing to reject this teaching altogether.

The *second* claim which I have on your attention is, my ardent and affectionate desire to promote your happiness. You cannot suspect me of any sinister design in what I have to say. This

would be to suppose me capable of "hating my own flesh." No, dear children, I have no desire to damp the sanguine joy, or cloud the smiling sun of your youth. I would not take from you a single rational pleasure. On the contrary, I delight to see you happy; and desire, by all the means in my power to promote your true enjoyment and honour. But you must allow me now, in my old age, when I have seen so much of the illusions of the world, and so many examples of the destruction of those who yielded to them, to counsel you, not in the style of youthful flattery, but in the language of "truth and soberness." You will find nothing in these letters intended to carry a point by overpainting, or by any other artifice. If you have a real disinterested friend on earth, who unfeignedly wishes to promote your best interest in both worlds, it is he who now addresses you. I shall not give a counsel or an injunction, but what I verily believe your precious Mother, if she were permitted to speak from the bosom of her Saviour, would ratify with all her heart.

You will observe that some of my counsels have a respect to objects beyond the period of childhood, which you now occupy. The truth is, I expect soon to leave you. Probably long before any of you shall reach adult age. Of course, I feel that what I have to say at all, had better be said *now*. I may have no other opportunity. Besides, one of the great truths which I wish to

impress upon your minds is, that you are, even at your present age, sowing the all important seeds of a future harvest of good or evil. You will not find a single habit or attainment recommended in the following pages, which, if you are ever to gain it, you will not find an advantage in having calculated and prepared for, as far as possible, at the earliest age. The earlier you begin to imbibe good principles, and lay good plans, the better will it be for all the future.

Let me entreat you, then, to receive with all the affection and docility of dutiful children, the counsels of one who, while he writes, looks up to "Him who has the residue of the Spirit," that what is rightly said, may be impressed upon your hearts, and made to bring forth precious fruit, to your happiness, and to the glory of his holy name!

LETTER II.

HUMAN NATURE.

DEAR CHILDREN:—On all important subjects there are certain great facts which must be regarded as fundamental; as lying at the foundation of all truth, and all duty. I feel that this is peculiarly the case in regard to the counsels which I am about to give you concerning your course in life. Among these fundamental facts are the depravity, the misery, and the numberless temptations of the world in which you live; the depravity of your own nature, ever ready to be attracted by the allurements and corruptions of the world; and your consequent need of the grace of God, at every step, for your guidance, protection, and deliverance. And until you know and feel, and in some degree lay to heart, that the world in which you live is a fallen, depraved world; that its habitual maxims and ways are hostile to your best interests; that you are yourselves, by nature, miserable sinners, standing in need of pardoning mercy, and sanctifying grace; and that you are every day exposed to snares and perils, from the joint influence of a depraved nature and a corrupt world;—until you have learned, in some good measure, to recognise these facts; to dwell upon them

daily and hourly; and to receive the lessons which they are adapted to teach; you are not prepared even to *begin* life. You are not prepared to meet or encounter the most common scenes, much less the more formidable dangers which are likely to beset your path every day that you live. But the moment you are brought to admit these humbling, momentous truths; to feel their reality; and to consider and treat them in some degree according to their practical importance; then, and not till then, may we hope you will be ready to make a proper estimate of the world; to guard against its allurements; to ponder well what you need for securing your true happiness; and to implore that divine aid which is necessary if you desire, in such circumstances, to perform any duty aright. And, therefore, when I see young people apparently forgetful of the character of their own hearts, and of the world in which they live; thinking that all is gold that glitters; and imagining that they can safely trust to their own wisdom and strength in every situation, I regard them as objects of the deepest commiseration, and as wholly unqualified for either the duties or the best enjoyments of life.

Know, then, dear children, and remember, that you belong to an apostate race; that we are all, according to the declaration of God's own word, "born in sin," and "shapen in iniquity;" that we are "by nature the children of wrath;" that our native propensities are all of them corrupt; opposed

to God; impelling us to habits and practices forbidden by his law, and unfriendly to our best interest. Remember, too, that, so far from being able to trust your own hearts to resist the temptations around you, and to guide you aright, they are all naturally inclined to that which is evil, and disposed to take side with the vanities and corruptions of the world. So that there is constant need of self-denial; of imposing restraints upon all our appetites and passions; and of submitting, especially in early life, to the counsels of the wise and the good, who have gone before us in the journey of life, and have had more experience than ourselves of its temptations and dangers.

Hence it is, that so large a part of religion is represented in Scripture as consisting in opposing our own corrupt inclinations; in "crucifying the flesh with the affections and lusts;" in constant efforts to bring down pride and vanity; to mortify our evil propensities; "to keep under the body;" to "rule our own spirits;" and, in general, to gain the victory over ourselves. All these expressions imply that the course of true wisdom is a warfare with evil; that our most formidable enemies are within; and that resisting our own corrupt nature is at once the most constant, and the most serious part of our duty as accountable creatures.

Nor is this all. Not only is our nature corrupt; not only are we from our very birth, prone to evil "as the sparks fly upward;" but we are also by

nature under condemnation. In the language of that incomparable Catechism, with which you have been familiar from lisping infancy—and every doctrine of which, as I believe, is drawn from the Bible—"All mankind by their fall lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever."

Such is the condition of our race by nature. Not only depraved and unworthy, but guilty, condemned, and perishing; not only in *danger* of being forever lost; but already under a sentence of death, unless rescued from it by the power and grace of the Saviour. All the posterity of Adam are by nature, "dead in trespasses and sins," having no resources within themselves for regaining the favour and image of God. "The carnal mind is enmity against God; it is not in subjection to the law of God, neither indeed can be." So that, left to ourselves, we should infallibly go on in sin to eternal, merited, and hopeless destruction.

Here you are, then, dear children, in a revolted, polluted, lost world, where the vast majority of the population is in open rebellion against God; where the prevailing habits and maxims are selfish, carnal, and opposed to all that is truly and spiritually good; where, if you fall in, and continue to go with the prevailing current, you are inevitably and eternally lost; where your only safety consists in renouncing the world, its idols, its master, and its

hopes; in "crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts; in resisting the fashions and allurements which reign around you; and taking refuge in that Saviour, who came to seek and to save that which was lost. Such are the temptations and perils with which you are constantly and every where surrounded; and such your only refuge. And, what greatly adds to your danger is, that if the representation which I have given be correct, your own hearts are naturally disposed to take the side of the enemy, and to betray you into his toils and his power. So that you are like persons travelling in an enemies' country, and liable every moment to be taken in some insidious and fatal snare, and whose own inclinations to yield to the enemy are among their greatest dangers. These are the humbling facts which it behoves you constantly to keep in view, and to regard as the great practical index of all your plans, resolutions, and efforts, as long as you live.

And as you can never be truly wise until you learn the corruption of your own nature, and how indispensably you need pardoning mercy, sanctifying grace, and unceasing guidance and help from on high; so you are not prepared to begin your intercourse with a corrupt world, until you have learned to appreciate the real character of human nature as it appears in all the walks of social life. The young, anterior to experience—and indeed many, long after experience ought to have

taught them otherwise—are too ready to put confidence in the professions and arts of men. They are apt to believe the flattering tongue; to rely on plausible promises; to trust heartless professions of attachment; to repose confidence in civilities never meant to be accepted; and to expect much from protestations of kindness, and assurances of friendship—all dictated by the merest selfishness, and never intended to be fulfilled. Rely on it, dear children, you live in a cold, selfish, heartless world. Its civilities are hollow; its promises are deceitful; its flatteries are insidious; its most splendid attractions are delusive. Expect little from the warmest professions, and be very backward to avail yourselves of the most fervent proffers of friendship. I am far, indeed, from recommending a misanthropic suspicion of every body. Your parents and grandparents ought to be the last persons in the world to indulge or recommend such a spirit. They have been so happy as to enjoy friendships sincere, disinterested, active, and unwearied, never to be forgotten. For these they would be thankful, and enjoin it upon you never to forget such precious friends. But remember, that social confidence is a plant of slow growth; that there are few cases in which it can be safely indulged; that where it exists, great care ought to be taken not to abuse it by laying too much upon it; and that, while you ought to receive all expressions of civility and respect with a suitable acknowledg-

ment, nothing can be more unwise and unsafe in such a world as this, than to trust indiscriminately to the professions and promises of men.

If such be our deplorable circumstances, as a race, and as individuals, then we need deliverance. We need salvation. To this great subject I would next entreat your attention.

LETTER III.

THE WAY OF SALVATION.

DEAR CHILDREN:—Salvation is a word often on your lips, and on the lips of many around you. The truly pious look forward to it with humble, joyful hope. And those who have no piety, and even the profane and profligate often speak of it as something which they desire and anticipate. But what is SALVATION? The very expression presupposes that we are all by nature in a state from which we need to be *delivered* or *saved.* We never apply this term to any but those who are in danger of being *lost.* When a man is drowning, or in the utmost peril of death in any form, and by the interposition of some benevolent and active friend, is rescued, we say he is *saved.* Now in a similar sense is the term used in the case before us. The salvation of man implies that he is, by nature not only in *danger*, but in a *lost* and *perishing* condition. Accordingly I told you, my dear children, in the preceding letter, that our whole race, and you among the rest, are, by nature in a state of guilt, depravity, and misery; that we are fallen creatures; under condemnation; exposed to the wrath and curse of God; liable not only to natural death, but also exposed to all the

terrors of eternal death, that is, of eternal separation from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power, unless delivered, or, in other words, *saved* by the interposition of some mighty and merciful deliverer. Such a great Deliverer has appeared to save sinners of our race;—to "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." And now, the word of God assures us, that there is "no other name given under heaven among men whereby we can be saved, but the name of Jesus Christ."

It is my earnest desire, dear children, to open this way of salvation to your minds, and to recommend it to your serious and solemn attention. Believe me, "it is not a vain thing for you, it is even your life." Unless you are, by the grace of God made partakers of this great salvation, it "had been better for you that you had not been born."

By the salvation revealed in the Gospel is meant, delivering us from all the ruins of the fall—from the condemnation of sin and the power of sin—restoring us to the favour and image of God—and bringing us to the everlasting enjoyment of his presence in heaven. This is salvation. Now I wish to show you how this great and blessed result is accomplished by the undertaking and work of Jesus Christ, whom we are accustomed, on that account, to denominate, with emphasis, our Saviour.

Man was made upright; in full possession of all

the powers necessary to perfect moral agency, and with all the dispositions which prompted to a perfectly correct use of those powers. But "man being in honour abode not." He rebelled against God. He violated the covenant under which he was placed, and became liable to the dreadful penalty which it denounced against transgression. In this fall of our first parents we are all sharers. "In Adam," says the apostle, "all die." "By one man's disobedience," he again declares, "many were made sinners." We have all totally lost our original righteousness; so that there is now, by nature, "none righteous, no not one." In short, we have all become guilty and polluted before God, and incapable of regaining his image or his favour by any merit or doings of our own. How, then are we to be delivered from these deplorable circumstances? How shall we escape that perdition which is the just reward of sin? "How can we escape the damnation of hell?" How can any be saved? God cannot set aside his own law, or permit his authority and majesty, as a righteous Governor, to be trampled under foot. To "clear the guilty;" to take impenitent rebels into the arms of his love, would be to "deny himself." Where, then, is our refuge? Must we sit down in despair, and say, "There is no hope? No, by no means. A God of infinite wisdom, power, and love, has devised and proclaimed a wonderful plan by which sin was punished while the sinner is

pardoned; by which justice is completely satisfied, while mercy is extended to the guilty and vile; by which "grace reigns through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord."

This wonderful and glorious plan of mercy consisted in the Father giving his own Son to obey, suffer, and die in our stead, as our substitute; and in the Son consenting to bear the penalty of the law for us; to put away our sin by the sacrifice of himself; and to bring in an everlasting righteousness for our justification. Yes, dear children, however coldly an unbelieving world may receive the amazing annunciation, the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, condescended, in his wonderful love, to assume our nature; to take the place of the guilty and the perishing; and to become the victim of Divine justice in their stead. His language, in the eternal counsel of peace, was, "Let me suffer instead of the guilty. Let me die to save them. Deliver them from going down to the pit; I will be their ransom." This wonderful, this unparalleled offer was accepted. The Father was well pleased for the righteousness sake of his Son. He accepted it as the price of our pardon; as that on account of which all who repent and believe should be justified. So that the Scriptures may well say concerning the Saviour—*He is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. He is the Lord our righteousness. He was*

wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and by his stripes we are healed. He bare our sins in his own body on the tree. He died the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. He delivered us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.

Here then, dear children, is the way, and the only way of a sinner's acceptance with God. In virtue of the covenant of redemption, the righteousness of Christ, or what he did and suffered on our behalf, is placed to the account of his people, *as if* they had performed it in their own persons. Though sinful and unworthy in themselves, God is pleased to pardon and accept them as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness sake of his beloved Son. I am aware, indeed, that some who speak much of "the merits of Christ," and profess to rely entirely on those merits, represent the whole subject in a very different light. They suppose that in consideration of the sufferings and death of our blessed Saviour, the old, original law of God, requiring perfect obedience, is repealed, and a *mitigated law* now prescribed as the rule of our obedience. So that now, under the Christian dispensation, a perfect obedience is not even required, but only an imperfect one, accommodated to our fallen condition and our many infirmities. But still, they insist, that this imperfect obedience is the meritorious ground of our acceptance with

God; and, of course, that eternal life is the purchase of our own obedience. In short, the doctrine of these errorists is, that the benefit conferred by the sufferings and death of Christ, consists, not in providing an entire righteousness for us, but only in abating the demands of the law; in bringing down the divine requisitions more to a level with our ability; and still enabling us, low as we have fallen, to be the purchasers of salvation by our own works.

Be assured, dear children, this view of the subject is a grievous departure from the Scriptural doctrine concerning the way of salvation. The Bible represents our pardon and acceptance with God as not founded, in any respect, or in any degree, on our own obedience; but as wholly of grace—as a mere unmerited gift, bestowed solely on account of what the Redeemer has done as our substitute and surety. It represents the holy law of God as remaining in all its original strictness without repeal or mitigation; and as falling with the whole weight of its penalty on all the impenitently guilty. But it declares that penalty to be removed from those who repent and believe the Gospel, not on account of any worthiness in themselves, as the meritorious ground of the benefit; but only on account of the perfect righteousness of Him who came to seek and save those who were lost. In short, a gracious God saves his people not by overlooking their sins; but by lifting the

penalty from them, and laying it upon the divine Redeemer, and for his sake letting them go free, and accepting them solely on account of his merit.

This righteousness of Jehovah the Saviour is said to be "to all, and upon all them that believe;"—that is, it is imputed to none—set to the account of none but those who receive Christ by faith. Faith is that great master grace by which we become united to the Saviour, and interested in his atonement. This righteousness, therefore, is called *the righteousness of faith, and the righteousness of God by faith.* Hence we are said to be *justified by faith*, and to be *saved by faith.* Not that faith, as an act of ours, is, in any measure, the ground of our justification; but all these expressions imply, that there is an inseparable connexion, in the economy of grace, between believing in Christ, and being justified by him, or having his righteousness imputed to us. Happy, thrice happy they, who can thus call the Saviour *theirs*, and who have thus "received the atonement!" Though unworthy in themselves, they are graciously pronounced righteous by their heavenly Judge, on account of what the Mediator has done. Their sins, though many, are, for his sake, forgiven them. They are *freely justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses.* They are "accepted in the Beloved." Though polluted and undeserving in their own character, they are "complete in Him."

There is no condemnation to them now; and in the day of judgment they shall find, to their eternal joy, that there is both safety and happiness in appearing in the righteousness of Him who loved sinners, and gave himself for them, clothed in "robes which have been washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb."

But we not only need to be justified by the righteousness of Christ; we also indispensably need to be sanctified by the Spirit of Christ. Accordingly, the purification of our nature, as well as the pardon of our sins, is one of the benefits purchased by Him, and secured by covenant to all believers. Hence the teaching and the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit must be regarded as an essential part of the great salvation of which I am speaking. We need as much to be delivered from the love of sin as from its condemnation. And for both, the plan of mercy held forth in the Gospel of Christ, makes equal and effectual provision. "Whom he justifies, them he also sanctifies; and whom he sanctifies, them he also glorifies." By the power of the Holy Spirit, the dominion of sin is broken in the hearts of all who are brought under the power of the Gospel. The reign of corruption in the soul is destroyed; the love of it is taken away; and though not perfectly sanctified in the present life, yet every believer has his sanctification begun. It is carried on, not by his own wisdom or strength, but by the same divine power

by which it was commenced; until he is, at last, made perfectly holy, as well as perfectly happy in the presence of his God and Saviour.

Thus does it appear that salvation is all of grace, sovereign, unmerited grace. The original devising of the plan, in the eternal counsels of peace, was prompted, not by any foresight of faith and holiness in the fallen creature; but in mere grace. The plan itself, in all its principles and provisions makes our salvation perfectly gratuitous, and wholly excludes all human merit. After the plan was formed and executed, and the knowledge of it imparted to us, no one would ever accept of it, did not the same grace which formed it, incline the sinner to lay aside his native opposition, and accept of the offered mercy. And even after cordially accepting it, no individual would ever cleave to his hope, and continue to embrace it, and live under its power, were he not "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation."

After the foregoing statement, the great question is, what message does this plan of salvation bring to you? The message which it brings, dear children, is an unspeakably solemn one. It charges *you* with being sinners—miserable sinners in the sight of God—without merit—without help, and without hope in yourselves. It offers you peace, and pardon, and sanctification, and eternal life, through the atoning sacrifice of the blessed Redeemer. It entreats you to lay aside your en-

mity, and to receive these benefits with humble and adoring gratitude, as a free, unmerited gift, "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Its language is, "Whosoever will, let him come, and take of the water of life freely." And again, "Whosoever cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." It calls upon you to renounce all confidence in yourselves, and to receive and rest on Christ alone for salvation as he is freely offered in the Gospel; to receive him as the Lord your righteousness, and the Lord your strength, and rejoice in him as your only hope. To this end, it is indispensable that you be convinced of sin; that you experience a deep and cordial sense of your own sinfulness and unworthiness; that you despair of saving yourselves; that you fall at the footstool of sovereign grace, feeling that you deserve to die, and that you can have no hope but in the atoning blood, and sanctifying Spirit of the Redeemer. It is your duty and your privilege to go to the Saviour at once, and cast yourselves on his mercy, without waiting for any qualifications to render you worthy of his favour. You are commanded to go to him as miserable, helpless sinners, not with a price in your hands; but to receive from him all that you need to make you holy and happy here and hereafter. And until you are prepared thus to go to him, as miserable, unworthy sinners, who deserve God's wrath and curse forever; until you sincerely feel that you have nothing to plead but the merit

of another; until you are ready to cast yourselves at the feet of the Saviour, and to be indebted for pardon and eternal life as a mere gift of grace, you have yet to learn the vital element of practical religion.

Dear children! will you hesitate a moment—will you wait for a second invitation to accept of such a Saviour? Will you turn away with ingratitude from such a salvation? Listen to the entreaty of one who loves you, and who has no stronger desire concerning you than to see you walking in the Spirit, and enjoying the consolation of the Gospel: or rather listen to the voice of that blessed Saviour himself who died for sinners; and who says to you, and to all who hear the Gospel—"Come unto me all ye who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out."

Think not, I beseech you, of putting off this acceptance of the Saviour's love until you are farther advanced in life. Do you forget that "the ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths peace," and that you cannot too soon begin to be happy? Besides, have you any assurance that you will live to be much more advanced in age than you now are? Not long since, a graduate of one of our colleges was heard to say, "I have finished my college education. I will now devote two years to the study of a profession; and *then* I will take one year to see what there is

in *that mighty thing they call* RELIGION." So calculated this careless, blooming youth. But before his plan was half accomplished, he suddenly fell sick; was seized with delirium; and died without hope. But there are facts, dear children, which ought to come nearer home. Can you forget your beloved brother and sisters, who, in the very threshold of their existence, were cut down, and laid in the grave? And what security have *you* that you will live to see another year? But even if you *are* permitted to live until you reach adult age, or until you are old and grey-headed, what reason have you to hope, if you go on hardening yourselves against the Gospel until that time, that you will then have grace given you to "consider your ways?" O, how many who were in youth thoughtful and tender, have become more and more callous to every serious impression, as they advanced in life, and have, at length, sunk into the grave without hope! Be entreated, then, dear children, *now*, while your hearts are tender; before the world has twined around them a thousand entanglements; before you become hardened by inveterate habits of sin; be entreated to make choice of that "good hope through grace," which will form the best treasure, and the only effectual pledge of safety and happiness in the voyage of life: the treasure which is emphatically "that good part which can never be taken away from you."

LETTER IV.

THE BIBLE.

DEAR CHILDREN:—IF you were walking, in a dark night, along a road full of sloughs, and pits, and snares, and dangers of every kind, what would you do for safety? You would naturally, if you could obtain it, take a *light* in your hands. You would also, if possible, engage a *guide*, strong and faithful, well acquainted with the road, and qualified to conduct and defend you. And, besides all this, you would vigilantly *look around you* at every step, and eagerly mark and avoid every spot that had a suspicious or doubtful appearance.

Your situation, dear children, in the journey of life, is precisely such as I have described; or rather, I ought to say, "the half has not been told you." You are just entering on a world, dark, corrupt, and full of allurement and danger. On every side enemies lie in wait to deceive and betray. You are and will be exposed to a thousand temptations and perils from which you have no wisdom or strength to deliver yourselves. You need direction and guidance at every step. Now the BIBLE presents the only complete and perfect map of the road which you are travelling. It was

given us to be "a light to our feet, and a lamp to our path." It exhibits, with unerring fidelity, every enemy, every snare, every danger which beset your path. It gives all the information, all the warning, all the caution, and all the encouragement which you need. It tells you, more perfectly than any other book, all that you have to fear, and all that you have to hope for. There is not a form of error, or of corruption, against which it does not put you on your guard; nor an excellence or a duty which it does not direct you how to cultivate and attain. "Wherewith," asks the Psalmist, "shall the young cleanse their way?"—"By taking heed thereto," he replies, "according to thy word." No one ever made this holy Book the guide of his life, without walking wisely, safely, and happily; without finding the truest enjoyment in this world, and eternal blessedness in the world to come.

Can you wonder, then, beloved children, that I place a high value on this blessed Book; that I earnestly recommend it to your serious attention, to your constant study, and to your devout and affectionate application and confidence? Can you wonder that I should delight to see it daily in your hands; much of its sacred contents committed to your memory; and your hearts deeply imbued with its spirit and its power? You, no doubt, remember how earnestly your precious Mother, now gone to the God who gave this Book, recom-

mended it to your attention; how assiduously she put it into your hands; how often she constrained you to commit portions of it to memory; and how frequently, on Sabbath evenings, she gathered you round her to recite those portions in her hearing, and to receive her instructions and counsels in regard to them. Can you ever forget these scenes, and the solemn, tender lessons which you then received? Call to mind her earnest looks, her affectionate tones, her unceasing labour to impress the contents of this sacred Book on your minds and hearts. Think of these things; and if you can recollect them without gratitude to God for such a mother, and without tears of regret that you have not profited more by her faithful counsels, you have less moral feeling, and less filial sensibility than I have been accustomed to give you credit for.

Why is it, my dear children, that so many young people regard the Bible with aversion, and consider the study of its pages, and especially committing them to memory, as a task and a burden? When we reflect that it is sent to us from heaven; that it contains the glad tidings of peace, and love, and salvation to a lost world; that it is besides full of the noblest specimens of literary beauty, and of tender pathetic eloquence that the world ever saw; that there is something in it adapted to touch the finest and best cords of human sensibility—why is it that you so often feel aversion to the study of

this volume, and would gladly be excused from the task of perusing its chapters? Alas! dear children, this is one of the many proofs that your nature, as I before stated, is depraved; and that you need the renewing and sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit, before you can understand and relish a book given by his inspiration. Every feeling of reluctance to the study of this Book which you experience, ought to fill you with alarm, and to constrain you to cry mightily to God that he would open your eyes and your hearts, and give you that taste for the best of all books, without which you cannot be prepared for the joys of his presence. Consider, I beseech you, that, as you have been made acquainted with this Book from your earliest childhood, so you will have to give an account for this knowledge. Many children around you have never had the Bible put into their hands; have never been taught to venerate and love its sacred pages; but you have been informed of its origin and value. You have enjoyed a privilege denied to thousands. Will you not be grateful for this privilege? Will you not manifest that you know how to prize a gift of more value than all the world beside? Can you deliberately consent to meet the dreadful condemnation of those who, from childhood, "knew the Master's will, and did it not."

I hope I need not remind you that the Book of God is to be read with feelings and in a manner

very different from those with which you read all other books. When you have read books of human composition once or twice, you have gotten from them all they contain—you have done with them. But with the perusal of the Bible you can never have done. The oftener you go over it, if you feel as you ought, the richer and more delightful will it appear. You can never exhaust its meaning or its interest. Like its divine Author, it has a length and breadth and depth and height, concerning which no human reader can ever say that he has completely fathomed its meaning, or measured its riches.

Other books are to be read with attention, and, if they abound with truth and wisdom, with respect; but the Book of God is to be read with the deepest veneration, as containing the mind and will of our heavenly Sovereign. In fact, every line of it is to be considered as the voice of God speaking to us. Woe to those, whether young or aged, who can handle the Bible with levity, make sport of its contents, or recite its solemn language as matter of jest! The Lord will not hold them guiltless who thus, practically, "take his name in vain." The Mohammedans manifest much more reverence for their *Koran*, than many Christians for the Bible. They never allow themselves to touch it without washing their hands. They handle it with the most pointed respect, never holding it lower than their girdles. Every copy of it com

monly contains an inscription or label on the cover, in these words—"Let none touch but those who are clean." How very differently do many, young and old, among us, treat the Holy Scriptures! I have often been distressed when I have seen children toss about their Bibles, and even throw them in the dirt, as they would the least valued of their play-things, or rattle over some of the most solemn language of the Bible with as little apparent thought or respect as they would repeat the veriest effusions of nonsense.

The Bible, farther, is to be read *daily*, and with *diligence*, as containing that daily food from which you are to derive spiritual aliment, and strength continually. It is to be read with fixed *attention*, seriously directing your mind to its rich and important meaning; with *humility*, feeling your need of the instruction and grace which it contains; with *prayer*, imploring the guidance of the Holy Spirit, that he may open your hearts to receive the engrafted word which is able to save your souls; with *application*—asking continually—"How does this concern *me?* Does it describe *my case?* Does it not contain a lesson which demands *my* special regard? Do *I* know any thing in my own experience of what is here taught?"

In this precious Book you will find every thing adapted to enlarge the mind, to gratify the taste, to elevate the affections, and to purify the heart. If you only sought the richest *entertainment*, you

could not open a book more fitted to gratify you. It is an inexhaustible mine of instruction as well as of beauty—the deeper you dig, the richer will you find its treasures. Its exquisite simplicity, its pathos, its sublimity, its heavenly wisdom, its purity, are all adapted to turn us away from the vanities of the world; to enlarge our views beyond these regions of disorder and darkness; to strengthen every high and holy motive; and to lead us upward to Him who is the source and the sum of all good. Happy, thrice happy will those children and young people be, who early learn to go to the BIBLE for all their sentiments, principles, and rules of action; who learn daily to go to that precious Book to direct them in their pursuits, to comfort them in their sorrows, to guide them in their perplexities, and to animate them in their labours whatever they may be! Such have the best pledge of temporal enjoyment, and of eternal blessedness. When, therefore, those who love you, and would in some measure take the place of your dear departed Mother, daily put this precious Book of God into your hands, and urge you to read and commit to memory a portion of its contents, do not allow yourselves to regard it as a task or a burden. Think from whom it comes—from the God who made you. Think of the great purpose for which it was given—to make you wise and eternally happy. Think of the only means of making it truly profitable to you—study-

ing it with devout attention, laying it up in your hearts, and practising it in your lives. Think of the solemn responsibility which the possession of this Book lays upon you—for to whomsoever much is given, of them shall much be required. And may the great Author of this Book give you grace to "seek for the heavenly wisdom which it contains as silver, and search for it as for hid treasures!"

LETTER V.

PRAYER.

DEAR CHILDREN:—"Prayer is the offering up of our desires to God, for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies." This is the definition given in a Catechism with which you are familiar, and a more complete and perfect one could scarcely be conceived. It is the offering up of our *sincere desires;* for unless it be *sincere*, it is but solemn mockery. It is to be addressed to *God alone;* for prayer addressed to any created being, is an act of treason to our rightful Sovereign. It is to be "for things *agreeable to the divine will;*" or else it is unauthorized and presumptuous. It is always to be presented *in the name of Christ;* for there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we can draw near to a holy God with acceptance, but the name of Jesus Christ. It must be accompanied with *confession of sin;* because the approach of a sinner to God, without an humble sense and acknowledgment of unworthiness, would be contrary to every principle of reason, as well as to the Christian plan of salvation. And, finally, it ought to include

a thankful acknowledgment of *divine mercies;* for without a grateful sense of God's goodness, we cannot be in a frame of mind fitted to receive farther favours.

I trust, dear children, I need not dwell long on either the *reasonableness* or the *duty* of prayer. If we are entirely dependent on God for every temporal and spiritual blessing, then it is surely reasonable that we acknowledge our dependence, and apply to him with humility and earnestness for his aid. If his favour is life, and his blessing the best riches, it is evident that we ought to supplicate them with importunity and perseverance. If we are sinners, unworthy of the divine favour, we ought to humble ourselves at his footstool, and make confession of our sins with penitence and obedience. If he has revealed a plan of mercy and grace to us, of which he invites and commands us to avail ourselves, then every principle of self interest concurs with reason, in urging us to seek with earnestness a participation in that mercy. And if our Maker and Redeemer has, in so many words, commanded us "by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving to make known our requests to God," who can question, for a moment, the *reasonableness* of a compliance with that command?

Nor is the *duty* of prayer less apparent than its *reasonableness.* The command of our Father in heaven is—"Pray without ceasing—pray always

with all prayer and supplication, and abound therein with thanksgiving. I will be inquired of by my people to do that for them which they need. Ask and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For if ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father in heaven give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him? All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly. If any one lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth liberally, and it shall be given him. Is any afflicted? let him pray. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. The Lord is rich in mercy to all that call upon him. In the day of my trouble I called upon the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me out of all my distresses."

Such are some of the numerous passages of Scripture which plainly *require* and *encourage* prayer. Can any one who reads and believes the Bible, doubt for a moment, that it is equally his *duty* and his *privilege* to go daily to the throne of grace to supplicate for all the temporal or spiritual

good which he needs? I hope, my dear children, you will not be disposed to say, notwithstanding such express and positive declarations of God's word, in the language of profane objectors of old—"Wherefore should we seek after God? Does he need to be informed of our wants? Can we, by importunity, alter his purposes? Where is, then, the advantage of asking for what we need? What profit shall we have if we pray unto him?" If you should ever be tempted to ask such a question, I would answer—"Much every way." God has connected our asking for blessings with receiving them. He has promised to hear and answer prayer. He has condescended to say, that he will regard with all the tenderness of a parent's heart, the cries of his children. He has said in his word, "Ye have not, because ye ask not." This is enough. But it is not all that is worthy of our attention. Prayer is not intended to inform God, but to benefit ourselves. It tends to remind us of our dependence and unworthiness; to impress our hearts with a deeper sense of the divine goodness and mercy; and to beget in our minds that humble, grateful, tender sense of our own weakness, and of our obligation to the Author of all good, which constitute the best preparation for receiving the gracious gifts of our heavenly Parent.

While your precious, lamented Mother was alive, what a privilege did you consider it to be allowed to go to her in all your troubles, and to

make known to her all your desires! How much greater the privilege to be allowed every hour free access to your Father in heaven, with all your anxieties and distresses, to pour out all your wants and wishes, your hopes and fears into the bosom of an Almighty Friend, who is ever able and ready to help!

Since, then, dear children, there are so many reasons prompting you to prayer; since you are always weak, always dependant, always unworthy, and always in need, can you doubt that it is your duty and your interest to abound in prayer? Let me entreat you, therefore, never to suffer a day to pass without engaging in this delightful and most reasonable exercise. Set apart fixed times for the purpose, that you may form such *habits* as will aid your memory, and prevent your neglecting it. Retire as soon as you can, after rising in the morning, to return thanks for the mercies of the night, and to implore the protection, the guidance, and the blessing of your heavenly Father, through the day. And in the evening, before drowsiness overtakes you, retire again, to praise him for the mercies of the day, and to ask for his guardianship during the night watches. But are these the only subjects of prayer? Far from it. They are numerous as the moments you live, and various as the objects which you are called to contemplate. Pray in the morning, that God would keep you from all evil in body or soul, through the day; that

he would create in you a clean heart, and renew within you a right spirit; that he would guard your speech and behaviour at all times, and in every situation; that he would enable you to mortify and subdue every sinful affection, and to overcome every improper habit; that he would deliver you from sloth, and pride, and vanity, and malice, and envy, and every evil temper; that he would enable you to treat all around you in a dutiful and becoming manner; in a word, that he would enable you to spend the day in a manner profitable to yourselves, and to the benefit of all around you. And in the evening pray, that he would pardon all the deficiencies and infirmities of the preceding day; that he would make you grateful for all the favours of his merciful Providence; that he would watch over you during the hours of darkness and repose; and bring you to the light of another day in health, in the exercise of your reason, and in the enjoyment of his favour and love.

And while you thus pray daily for yourselves, it is your privilege and duty to include in your petitions all with whom you are connected in the various relations of life. You ought to pray continually for your beloved *father*, who is engaged in such important labour for the Church, and who loves you with an affection and solicitude which you can never repay; for your *grandparents*, who are daily praying for you, and who are falling more and more under the infirmities of age; for

one another, that you may be guided and blessed amidst all the temptations and dangers of youth; for your *teachers;* for your *school-mates;* for the *poor children* around you, who have none of the advantages of instruction and restraint which you enjoy; for your *friends*, and *neighbours*, and all with whom you are acquainted. O, my dear children, if you prayed as you ought every day for all these, how much happier would you be! What a benign influence it would have on your whole temper and conduct! It would make you kind, tender hearted, and forgiving toward all with whom you conversed; and make all of them, in their turn, love you as a friend and benefactor.

Let me make, on this subject, one more suggestion. Most people, especially most young people, have no idea of engaging in prayer unless at particular times when they retire for the purpose. I wish you all, dear children, besides your stated seasons of prayer, morning and evening, to form the habit of lifting up your thoughts and your desires to God in any and every situation; when walking by the way; when surrounded with company; when met by any call of duty, or by any circumstance of a doubtful aspect, or perplexing character—be in the habit of silently but devoutly looking up to God for wisdom and strength to perform every duty. This kind of intercourse with God may be carried on at all times, and in all situations; and, I will add, was never sincerely

adopted by any one without being connected with guidance and consolations of unspeakable value. In this way the suggestion of the apostle in writing to Timothy will be realized, that "*every thing* be sanctified by the word of God, and prayer."

LETTER VI.

CULTIVATION OF THE MIND.

DEAR CHILDREN:—That every human being is bound to cultivate, in the best manner, the intellectual powers which God has given him, I hope you will take for granted, anterior to all argument; and, although the moral aspects of education are the most vitally important, yet as no one can be a moral agent without some degree of intellect; so it may be said, that the wisest and best culture even of our moral powers, depends more on the discipline, the enlargement, and the furniture of the intellect, than is commonly supposed.

The cultivation of the mind comprises two things, and two only, viz: giving it proper habits of exercise, and filling it with useful knowledge. The case is precisely similar with regard to the *body*. The sum total of all that we are called to do for the benefit of the body, is to secure its strength by constant and wholesome action or exercise, and to furnish it with appropriate nourishment. On the one hand, were its *exercise* ever so abundant, if left without aliment, it would speedily sink into weakness and death; and, on the other, if its aliment be ever so plentiful and rich, yet if it

be left wholly without *exercise*, it will soon become a mass of disease and corruption. Precisely so is it in the cultivation of the mind. Exercise and aliment are equally indispensable, and must go together. If the mind be not taught to think, and to feel an appetite for intellectual provision, all the knowledge in the world, if introduced into it, would be of little use. But, if it be taught only to think and feel, and be furnished with none of the appropriate aliment of knowledge, it cannot grow either in strength, or in a capacity to act its part in the world with dignity or usefulness.

As these principles lie at the foundation of all intellectual culture, so they are also adapted to instruct us with regard to the wisest and best means of conducting that culture, with regard to the departments of knowledge most worthy of being studied, and the relative stress which ought to be laid on different pursuits. If you would be trained up merely to be splendid butterflies, to shine and to please the superficial and the empty, for a day, and, having done this, to die like senseless insects; why, then, a corresponding plan of culture must be adopted. But, if you wish to be regarded as rational creatures; to be prepared for sober thought and action; to "serve your generation by the will of God;" to die in peace, and to be remembered with love and veneration when you are gone, then it is perfectly manifest a very different method of training is indispensable.

I trust you will not hesitate a moment in deciding which of these courses you ought to choose. I trust the way of practical wisdom, of piety, and of usefulness, will be the object of your prompt and decisive choice. If so, the course of mental culture which you ought to adopt, cannot possibly be mistaken by a mind of the least reflection. If you are to feel and act as moral accountable agents, and to consider human life as a serious, momentous thing; then, doubtless, you will feel that you are bound, first of all, and above all, to exercise your minds in such a manner, and to store them with such branches of knowledge, as will tend most effectually to enlarge them, to strengthen them, to inspire them with practical wisdom, and to furnish them with the means of the most solid and extensive usefulness.

Upon this principle, I would say, let your first and chief attention be directed to those branches of knowledge which lie at the foundation of all that is enlarged, liberal, and elevated in human pursuits; such as Grammar, Rhetoric, Geography, the Latin, Greek, and French languages, Natural and Moral Philosophy, the elements of Mathematical science, Chemistry, and as many of the branches of Natural History as may be within your reach, especially Botany and Mineralogy. These are all proper for both sexes; and the more you gain of all of them, the better fitted will you be both for enjoying life, and for fulfilling its various and momentous duties.

I grant, indeed, my dear grandson, that with regard to what is denominated Classic literature, and Mathematics, I wish *you* to go more thoroughly to work, than would be desirable, or perhaps proper, for your sisters. But I hope that neither of these will be entirely neglected by *them*. For I have an impression, that the careful study, to a certain extent, of the best of the dead languages, and an intelligent acquaintance with the elementary principles of Mathematics, ought to be omitted by none who can possibly attain them. In my opinion, they are adapted to produce an effect on the mind, and to diffuse an influence over all its other acquisitions, more happy and more important than is commonly recognised, even by many of the educated themselves.

Besides the popular sciences just mentioned, with which every human being who can afford it, ought to seek some good acquaintance, there is an extensive and important field of knowlege, which is defined by the general term of *literature*, and, in our case, of *English Literature*. There is a large class of writers, with whose works every one who claims to be intelligent and well informed, must be familiar. To this department belongs the whole subject of *History*, which, I trust, will receive the serious attention of all of you; and about which I hope you will take enlightened advice, as a number of the most attractive and popular writers in this department, are unfit to be

perused without much reserve and caution. To these, of course, ought to be added, those great writers, both in prose and poetry, which deserve to be ranked as *English Classics;* and, with which, I feel confident, you will seize the earliest opportunity of becoming acquainted. I refer to such writers as Milton, Shakspeare, Dryden, Addison, Steele, Pope, Thompson, Gray, Young, Goldsmith, Johnson, Cowper, Beattie, and a number of others, whom I cannot pause to specify, but with whom it would be highly discreditable not to have some intimate knowledge. Without an acquaintance with these writers, you cannot appreciate the riches, the beauties, or the purity of your vernacular tongue, or form for yourselves a good style of writing. In these writers, too, you will find a great store-house of fine sentiment, as well as diction, adapted greatly to enlarge and elevate the mind, to impart to it its highest polish, and to prepare it for its best efforts.

There are certain accomplishments commonly called *ornamental*, deemed by many desirable for females, and by some considered as of much consequence. Among these are dancing, music, painting, drawing, embroidery, &c. With regard to *dancing*, your beloved grandmother and myself never thought proper to permit any of our own children to be instructed in this art; not because we thought the *act* of dancing itself criminal, but because we considered it as inseparably and almost

necessarily connected with the whole system of balls, dancing assemblies, midnight parties, &c., all of which we deemed criminal, and in a great variety of ways, hostile to the principles and the claims of true religion. We do, indeed, find dancing spoken of in the Old Testament Scriptures, as having been employed, even on occasions of religious joy; but never on such occasions do we read of the midnight dance, nor of promiscuous dancing, that is, of the sexes together. And with respect to the New Testament, we read there of only one actual dance, and that was performed by a profligate woman, and connected with crime of the most attrocious and revolting character.

As to *music*, I am persuaded it is the duty of every one who is able to do it, to acquire the power of uniting in the social praise of God with excellence and efficiency. The cultivation of vocal music, and the attainment of such a degree of skill in it as is essential to imparting an interest in the exercise, are conducive to health and favourable to moral and spiritual improvement. So far, I am confident you ought all to go. And if my granddaughters should have a special taste and love for instrumental music, I am by no means prepared to advise that they deny themselves the pleasure. It is an elegant accomplishment, and when wisely employed, may be connected with innocent pleasure, and sometimes with benefit. But I should deeply regret to find them aiming at

that *exquisite skill* in instrumental music, which cannot be attained without great expense, much loss of time, and that intense and long continued attention which cannot fail to engross the mind and stand in the way of more worthy objects of pursuit, if it do not wholly exclude them. This is so unworthy of a rational accountable creature, that I would infinitely rather my dear grandchildren should know nothing of music, than that they should carry their zeal for it, and their devotion to it, to such an injurious length. And as to my dear grandson, while I hope always to hear him unite in singing the praises of God in the sanctuary with taste and skill, it would give me unspeakable pain to hear that he was regarded as a highly acceptable and admired singer at convivial meetings, and that his company was courted on that account. I concur in opinion with the old Grecian sage, who, when a young gentleman of his acquaintance, of respectable station and employment in society, had performed on an instrument of music with consummate skill and effect, said to him, "Are you not ashamed, my young friend, to play so well?"

In conducting the intellectual culture of the young, there is one question which I presume you will not fail to ask, and which I wish to anticipate and answer in this little system of affectionate advices. The question is, whether *Novels* ought to have any place in the course of reading prescribed for young people? This is a question of

exceeding great importance. When I was a youth it was far less interesting and momentous, as a practical matter, than it has now become. Three quarters of a century, and more especially a century ago, the number of this class of writings was so small, and their popular circulation so inconsiderable, that their influence was scarcely worthy of notice, compared with that which they have more recently exerted, and which they are daily going on to extend. Bear with me then, dear children, while I dwell a little on this subject, and call your attention to some thoughts which I pray God may be deeply impressed upon your minds.

That fictitious history is not in its own nature and necessarily criminal, will probably be acknowledged by all. It *may* be so construed as to awaken curiosity, to excite sympathy, and to impress the understanding and the heart in a salutary manner. Of course, to condemn every thing of the kind *as such*, and however constructed or employed, would be to pronounce an unjust judgment. Hence we find examples of this mode of instruction in the holy Scriptures; and on the same principle, some of the wisest and best human teachers in all ages, have used the vehicle of lively and interesting fiction, known to be such at the time, for insinuating into the mind moral and religious lessons, which in a different form, might not so readily have gained admittance.

But the great error of modern times is two-fold;

First, in multiplying publications of this kind, until they bear an inordinate and injurious proportion in the current literature of the day; and, *Secondly*, in constructing them upon a plan adapted to degrade virtue and piety, to recommend vice, and of course to prove seductive and immoral in their whole influence.

Even when such works are perfectly unexceptionable in their character; when they are wholly free from any thing improper, either in language or sentiment, they may be productive of incalculable mischief, if, as now, they are issued in excessive *numbers* and *quantity*. Leaving the *character* of modern novels entirely out of the question, the enormous number which for the last half century has been every day increasing, has become a grievous intellectual and moral nuisance. As long as they were *few* in number, and were regarded not as the *substance*, but only as the *seasoning* of the literary feast, they occupied but a small share of public attention. The chief time and attention of the reading portion of the community were mainly devoted to works of substantial value, fitted to strengthen, enlarge, and enrich the mind. But, within the last twenty or thirty years, the number of novels has increased so rapidly; they have become so prominent and alluring a part of the current literature of the day; and by their stimulating and inexhaustible variety, have so drawn away the minds of the aged as well as the

young from solid reading, that they have formed the principal reading of a large portion of the community, and, of course, have become a snare and an injury to an extent not easily calculated. As long as exhilarating gases, or other stimulating substances, are administered sparingly, and as medicines, they may be altogether harmless, and even essentially useful. But, when those who have taken them for some time in this manner, become so enamoured with them as to be no longer satisfied with their moderate and salutary use, but make them their daily and principal aliment, they become inevitably mischievous. They destroy the tone of the stomach, and, in the end, radically undermine the health.

So it is with the insidious excitement of novels. Were the reader of them to take none into his hands but those which might be safely pronounced perfectly pure and innocent; and were he certain that he would never be tempted to go beyond the most moderate bounds in seeking and perusing even such, there would, perhaps, be little danger to be apprehended. But no one can be thus certain of either. The general stimulus of fictitious narrative is morbid and disorderly. It excites the mind, but cannot fill or enrich it. The probability is, that he who allows himself to enter on this course, will be led on, like the miserable tippler, from one stage of indulgence to another, until his appetite is perverted; his power of self-denial and

restraint lost; and his ruin finally sealed; or, at least, his mind so completely indisposed and unfitted for the sober realities of practical wisdom, for the pursuits of solid science and literature, as to be consigned to the class of superficial drivellers as long as he lives.

The truth is, novels—even the purest and best of them—are adapted, not to *instruct*, but only to *amuse;* not to *nourish* and *strengthen*, but only to *exhilarate.* They even enervate the mind; they generate a sickliness of fancy; and they render the ordinary affairs and duties of life altogether uninteresting and insipid. After wading through hundreds of the most unexceptionable volumes belonging to this class—what has been gained? What has been laid up for future use? Nothing. Not a trace of any thing useful has been left behind. The days and nights devoted to their perusal have been absolutely lost. What infatuation is it for a rational creature who is sent into the world for serious and important purposes, and who is hastening to the judgment seat, thus to waste precious time; and, what is worse, thus to pervert his mind, and disqualify himself for sober employments! The celebrated Dr. Goldsmith, in writing to his brother, respecting the education of his son, expresses himself in the following strong terms, which are the more remarkable, as he himself had written a novel:—"Above all things, never let your son touch a romance or novel. These paint beauty in

colours more charming than nature, and describe happiness that man never tastes. How delusive, how destructive are those pictures of consummate bliss! They teach the youthful mind to sigh after beauty and happiness which never existed; to despise the little good which fortune has mixed in our cup, by expecting more than she ever gave; and, in general, take the word of a man who has seen the world, and has studied human nature more by experience than precepts—take my word for it, I say, that such books teach us very little of the world."* He might have gone farther, and said—They teach us little of *any thing;* and so pervert the taste, as to take away all relish for applying the mind to any thing sober or useful. Often have I known young men and women so bewitched by novels, that they could read nothing else. They sought for new works of this class in every direction; devoured them with insatiable avidity; and became less and less disposed for pursuing any study either prescribed by their preceptors, or adapted to promote their ultimate enjoyment; until their prospects for both worlds were irrecoverably overcast with clouds and darkness.

Imagine not, dear children, that *you* will exercise more resolution than others, and thus avoid the snare of which I have spoken. You cannot

* Life of Goldsmith, prefixed to his Miscellaneous Works.

answer for yourselves in this matter, any more than the man who is constantly exposed to the temptation of stimulating drinks can be sure of escaping the danger. Rely upon it, the more confident you are of your own wisdom and firmness in avoiding the evil in question, the greater your peril. In this, as in many other things, the only complete safety is to be found in wholly avoiding the dangerous territory.

But there is another source of evil in this department of literature, still more serious and formidable. A very large proportion of modern novels, are far from being innocent. They are positively seductive and corrupting in their tendency. They make virtue to appear contemptible, and vice attractive, honourable, and triumphant. Folly and crime have palliative and even commendatory names bestowed upon them. The omnipotence of *love* over all obligations and all duties, is continually maintained; and the extravagance of sinful passion represented as the effect of amiable sensibility. Surely these representations can have no other tendency than to pervert the moral sentiments, and to corrupt the hearts of those who habitually dwell upon them. And even though they be, at first, contemplated with abhorrence, no one can tell how soon the mind may be gradually and insidiously reconciled to them, by familiarity with the infectious influence.

For example; the novels of *Sir Walter Scott*

have been read with eager delight by millions of the young and the old; and many pronounce them at least innocent. But those who read them with intelligence, and with a proper estimate of the times and the characters which he undertakes to portray, will perceive that the writer arrays himself against the patriotism and the piety of some of the best men that ever adorned the history of his country; that he exhibits orthodoxy and zeal under the guise of enthusiasm and fanaticism; that he strives to cover with dishonour, men "of whom the world was not worthy;" and to elevate and canonize their persecutors. In short, that his general influence is wholly unfriendly to religion. These characteristics pervade the most popular of his novels. Of course few of his readers, especially of his youthful readers, are aware of his misrepresentation, and, therefore, are not armed against the mischievous influence.

But there is a poison lurking in this field, still more virulent and fatal. A large portion of novels may be charged with being seductive and immoral, upon a more refined and deep laid plan. They are systematic, and, in some instances, ingenious and plausible apologies for the most atrocious crimes. In many modern productions of this kind, the intelligent reader will recognise the following process of representation: Corrupt opinions are put into the mouth of some favourite hero, the splendour of whose character, in other respects, is

made to embellish the principles which he holds, and the force of whose eloquence is employed to recommend the most unreasonable and mischievous dogmas. When this hero commits a crime, and when, by this crime, according to the fixed laws of the divine government, he is involved in serious difficulty, if not lasting and fatal misery, the fashionable novelist endeavours to throw the blame on the religious and moral institutions of society, as narrow, illiberal, and unjust. When a splendid, but corrupt woman, has forsaken the paths of virtue, and when she suffers in her reputation and her comfort, by such conduct, all this is ascribed to "the wretched state of civilization"—to "the deplorable condition of society." Every opportunity is taken to attack some essential principle of morality, under the title of a "prejudice;" to ridicule the duties of conjugal and domestic life, as flowing from "contracted" and "slavish" views; to stigmatize the sober pursuits of honest industry, as "dull" and "spiritless;" and, in a word, to frame an apology for robbery, murder, suicide, and the indulgence of every propensity, for which a corrupt heart can plead an inclination.

Now, my dear children, when novels of this kind are placed on the shelves of every circulating library, and strewed over every part of our land, what security have youthful novel-readers that many of this class will not fall into their hands, and that they may not imbibe the fatal poison

before they are aware? Is it any wonder that wise parents and guardians are painfully apprehensive of such danger? Many amiable and well-intentioned young people, who fancied they were gaining amusement only, have been unwarily betrayed into opinions, and prepared for practices which they would once have regarded with abhorrence, and which ultimately led them into error, crime, and ruin. Since, then, there are so many novels of this insidious and baneful character; and since it is by no means easy for the young and inexperienced to distinguish between the innocent and the vile, you will not wonder that I advise, nay, entreat you to avoid the reading of novels altogether; never to allow yourselves to take a volume of this kind into your hands at all. The most innocent of them, as you have seen, are worthless, and the perusal even of *them*, a waste of time; and if you allow yourselves to touch any of them, you will be in danger of being led astray to an extent which you can hardly be made to anticipate. I beseech you, dear children, trust one who sincerely loves you; who understands the subject of which he is speaking; and who would not deprive you of a single safe or solid pleasure—trust him when he earnestly exhorts you, NEVER TO READ A NOVEL.

You will, perhaps, ask, what is my opinion of what are called "religious novels," that is, of fictitious narrative, designed to illustrate and recom-

mend religion? I am compelled to say, that my deliberate judgment is unfavourable to *these* also. They are neither edifying nor safe as instructors in the great department of religion. I do not deny that *some* of this class may be adapted to do good, and may have been actually useful. But this is not the question. The question is, whether, as a system, it is better to instruct in religion through the medium of fictitious narrative, and by means of thrilling incidents, or by plain, sober, didactic, and exhortatory address. In general, I cannot help deciding in favour of the latter. The reason why the large majority of mankind prefer fictitious narrative is, that they love *excitement;* and most youthful readers will be more likely to take interest in the "story," than in the moral lessons which it conveys. Condiments and stimulants are useful in our food; but to make our daily food consist wholly or mainly of condiments and stimulants, would not, surely, be wise or salutary.

But this is not the worst. Among the novels called *religious*, there are various classes. Almost all the different religious denominations have issued novels appropriate to their respective sectarian characters. We not only have those which have been put forth by the friends of truth and piety; but, also, many by the advocates of error. Socinianism is now strenuously inculcated through the medium of fictitious narrative. Cold Pelagianism on the one hand, and Antinomianism on the other, have been

presented in the same manner. Amidst these alternate pleadings of orthodoxy and heresy, how shall the youthful learner discriminate? Were he to take up a didactic treatise in favour of Socinian or Pelagian opinions, he would see the error in a moment, and be on his guard against it. But when he is borne away by the excitement of a stirring narrative, and a spirited, eloquent dialogue, he may imbibe the poison of error, before he is aware.

You must not, dear children, consider me as fanciful, if I express an opinion, that the present prevailing state of mind of the religious public has some connexion with that class of novels of which I am now speaking. The most striking characteristic of the present time is *a love of excitement.* The old and sober mode of proceeding in any thing has become unpopular and intolerable. Our children can scarcely be prevailed upon to read any thing unless it comes in the shape of a striking story. If any one wishes a pious *tract* to be read, he must construct it in the form of a thrilling fictitious narrative. Every dish must be highly seasoned; every draught must be a dram. Is it any wonder that, in such a condition of the public taste, all old methods of doing good should be despised, and the Church as well as the world filled with new opinions, new estimates of things, and "new measures?"

Be assured, when your mind is brought, by any

means, whether by an insatiable love of fictitious narrative, or by any other form of exciting composition, to relish nothing conveyed in the old form of solid, didactic, direct instruction, it is high time to examine whether you are not acquiring habits unfriendly to sober thought, to the best mental culture, and to the acquirement of the most valuable knowledge. How often have I met with young people, of both sexes, who could talk fluently, and with apparent intelligence, of the volumes of Miss Burney, Mrs. Radcliffe, Madame De Stael, Miss Edgeworth, and Scott, and Cooper, and Bulwer, and even of the depraved and infamous Byron;—but, who were struck dumb if you spoke to them of Shakspeare; of Bacon; of Milton; of Addison; of Thompson; of Young; of Dryden; of Pope, and Johnson, and Robertson, and Junius, and Cowper, and other English classics, of whom, if they had ever heard, they seemed to know nothing! Is this the way to cultivate the mind? Does this speak for or against the devourer of novels?

The sum of my counsel, then, under this head, is, that if you wish really to cultivate your minds, and to prepare them for healthful and useful action, let your studies be solid, diligent, and persevering. Let your reading be such as will fill your minds with the knowledge of facts, principles, and sentiments of the enriching and elevating kind. Let your first and most intimate acquaintance be

with those authors whose works will tend to fit you for answering the great purpose for which you were sent into the world. Carefully avoid every species of reading which tends to turn away your minds from sober, practical views of life and duty. And remember that, for every book you read, and for every mental influence which you invite, you have to render a solemn account.

There is one more counsel, dear children, with which I will close this letter. It is, that whatever subject you study—whatever book you read, you do it *faithfully* and *thoroughly*. Leave nothing until you understand it well;—until you have, as far as possible, gone to the bottom of it. You may rely upon it that no solid knowledge is to be gained without patient, unwearied labour. Be not in haste, then, to pass on to another subject or lesson, until you have completely mastered that in which you may be engaged. Be not contented with merely enabling yourselves to recite a lesson with plausible fluency. Be sure that you thoroughly comprehend, not only its obvious meaning, but also its elementary principles. Despise the indolence of those, who, in learning languages, are constantly using the miserable crutches of *translations*, instead of walking with the use of their own limbs; and who, whenever a difficulty occurs in mathematics, or any other subject, instead of delving it out themselves, ignobly ask help from some wiser and better scholar. This is

cheating yourselves. That which is gained by your own efforts, and with considerable labour, will be better understood, and more firmly lodged in the mind, than that which is imparted gratuitously by others, without any vigorous mental exercise on your part.

The fact is, the pursuit of knowledge may be compared to the task of one who is called to cross a high and craggy mountain. If he is willing to forego his own best interests, both as to bodily and mental health, he may employ some sturdy, athletic assistant to take him up in his arms, and bear him over the steep ascent, and deposit him in safety on the other side, without the use of a muscle of his own. But what would he be the better for it, at the end of his journey? His limbs would not be braced. His chest would not be expanded. He would miss a thousand interesting objects of attention which the use of his own feet would have brought to his view. After a thousand such boasted expeditions, he might live and die the same feeble, nervous dyspeptic, that he was when he set out. Whereas, he who resolves to climb the same mountain by his own efforts; who addresses himself to the task with patient persevering labour; who takes step after step, slowly, but wisely and firmly; may not gain the ascent quite as speedily as his weaker contemporary; but he will gain it much more to his own profit and comfort, and, in the end, find every power invigorated by the

enterprise. O, if children and young people could feel how foolish it is to procure themselves to be borne up the mountain of knowledge by others, instead of climbing it themselves, they would despise all the "labour-saving machinery" to which many of them are so fond of resorting; and would remember that what is gained by their own intellectual efforts, is more solid, wears better, digests better, and is productive of richer fruit, both to themselves and others.

It is a law impressed by our Maker on the intellectual, as well as the physical man, that "if any will not work, neither shall he eat." It is a real blessing, if we did but know it, to have labour connected with all our attainments. Thus do we best answer the great end of our being; thus do we invigorate every power, and become prepared most effectually to "serve our generation by the will of God.

LETTER VII.

CULTIVATION OF THE HEART, AND THE MORAL HABITS.

DEAR CHILDREN:—By the *heart*, I mean the moral feelings, dispositions, and affections. And by *cultivating* the heart, I mean directing much attention to restraining, regulating, and purifying all its exercises. This may be said to lie at the foundation of all duty and all happiness. Were your intellectual powers cultivated with all possible care and success, and your moral faculties neglected, you might be polished and elegant demons; but would be miserable yourselves, and a curse to society. Whether, therefore, you regard your own present enjoyment, and everlasting welfare, or the happiness of those around you, you cannot too early remember the great purpose for which you were sent into the world, and the relations which you sustain as rational, social, and immortal creatures. You cannot too early or too diligently learn to restrain your passions; to deny yourselves; and to cultivate those benevolent, meek, humble, and amiable habits, which are indispensable to tranquillity and peace of mind, and which alone can prepare you to adorn and bless the social circles

with which you may be connected. I draw your attention the more earnestly to this great subject because I see so many young people who appear never to think of the importance, or even utility of this part of their education.

If you have not learned, dear children, that you are by nature prone to be proud, vain, selfish, envious, irascible, sensual, malignant, and, in a word, to indulge the various appetites and passions which tend to destroy your own peace, and to invade the comfort of those around you; if you have not discovered that this is the tendency of your nature, and that resisting it will call for much self-denial, and continual, and sometimes for agonizing effort, you have attended less to your own feelings, and habits, and less to the character of your friends and associates than I am willing to suppose.

Perhaps you will ask—Does not *religion* cover all this ground? Where the power of Christian principle reigns in the heart, will not every thing intended to be included in this letter follow as a matter of course? If the *plan of salvation*, treated in a former letter, be received and obeyed, will not all the objects contemplated in the present letter, be included and secured? Whence, then, the necessity, or even the propriety, of making it matter of separate consideration? I answer, the religion of Christ, in its spirit and power, does indeed embrace all moral excellence. It does, in fact,

where it bears appropriate and entire sway, include every moral feeling, affection, and habit, which can adorn and elevate human nature. And yet it is to be lamented that many who cherish the Christian hope, are not as much aware of this fact as they ought to be; and are not so careful to exhibit all the *loveliness*, as well as the *purity* of example which become them, as is desirable. And, besides, I have always found that there is a great advantage in pursuing rather more into detail the various branches of the Christian temper, than is commonly done even in the best treatises on religious character and duty. The French have a phrase which expresses more exactly than any English one which I can recollect, my meaning in the title of this letter. The phrase I refer to, is *Les petites morales;* by which they appear to understand those *moral delicacies* of feeling, temper, and intercourse, which, though not always found actually shining in every professing, or even every real Christian, do really belong to the Christian code of ethics, and are indispensable to a complete and exemplary character.

The duties which grow out of our relations to God, are generally acknowledged by all professors of religion. However defective their obedience, their obligations are seldom disputed. But if it be the law of God, not only that we should "love Him with all our heart and soul and strength and mind," but also that we should "love our neigh-

bours as ourselves," then the duties growing out of this great law are more multiplied, tender, delicate and important than most of those who are called religious people recognise in practice, or even in theory.

It is true, the root of all sound morality is religion. And it is equally true, that the deeper sense any one has of the constraining love of Christ, and of the holiness, majesty, omniscience, and omnipresence of God, the more faithful he will be in the discharge of all moral duties, both in private and in public. Labour then, day by day, to gain a deeper impression of the claims of your Creator and Redeemer upon you. Meditate much on the Divine glory. Cultivate a devout spirit. Study to walk with God in the exercise of faith, and love, and prayer. And endeavour to keep constantly before your minds his all seeing eye, his infinite holiness, his judgment seat, and those righteous retributions which he has in store for all his creatures, whether they be good, or whether they be evil? This is cultivating the heart in the most essential and radical sense. This is going to "the root of the matter." That morality, and that alone, which is grafted upon this sanctified stock, will be regarded with approbation by the Searcher of hearts, and stand the test of the great day.

But while you labour with your hearts, that they may be habitually laid open, with all the soft-

ness and tenderness of spiritual sensibility, to the claims of your Creator and Redeemer; study with no less diligence to cherish a deep sense of all the duties which you owe to your beloved relatives, to your friends, to your neighbours, and to all with whom you have intercourse. To perceive the theory of these duties, is the province of the understanding; to enter into them, as a practical matter, and under a solemn sense of obligation, is an affair of the heart; and the more deeply your hearts are schooled both in the principles and practice of these duties, the more they may be said to partake of that culture which I am now recommending.

When I imagine to myself what an influence your precious Mother might have had in cultivating your moral feelings and habits, if it had pleased God to spare her to you; when I think of the happy power which her delicate, forming hand, might, by the divine blessing, have exerted over the heart of each of you;—the heart—as Mrs. Hannah More expresses it—that "seat of evil propensities—that little troublesome empire of the passions;"—I could sit down and weep afresh that you are never to enjoy that culture. But, happily, there is a source of infinitely better culture. Try to lay to heart your weakness and your wants, and implore without ceasing the enlightening, subduing, and sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit, and you will find "his grace sufficient for you."

There are special duties which you owe to your beloved surviving Parent, and to all your domestic relatives, of the most peculiar and tender kind; duties which it is equally your privilege and your honour to discharge. These are veneration, love, gratitude, and a dutiful respect to all their feelings, as well as their interests. Here children are extremely apt to fail. Affection is generally found to descend from parents to their offspring, and in general from elder to younger relatives, in great strength; but from children to parents, or from the young to the old, it seldom rises with equal vigour. Let not this be said of you. Constantly cherish toward your beloved Father, and all your elder relatives, not merely an outward respect, and dutifulness of deportment, but a cordial and ardent affection; a sincere and lively gratitude for all those anxious cares and labours on their part for your benefit, for which you have been indebted ever since you were born, and for which you can never make an adequate return. Try to please them by the constant manifestation of love, confidence, and grateful veneration; and let them see that you treasure up, to your profit, all their instruction, reproofs, and warnings. When the *heart*, as well as the outward conduct, is conformed to these sentiments, O, how endearing and happy is the intercourse between parents and children! What a charm is diffused over the whole aspect of domestic society!

Let me entreat you, also, early to learn the duty and the pleasure of *living in affectionate harmony among yourselves.* I can scarcely express to you the pain which I have sometimes felt when I have perceived any thing like a spirit of strife and acrimony rising between you, and leading to the exchange of angry looks and passionate language. Surely three motherless children ought to feel more closely bound together than to indulge in such a temper and conduct. If you do not love one another, who can you expect will love you? Be careful, then, continually to cultivate a spirit of brotherly and sisterly affection toward each other. Let nothing interrupt this. When any contest arises, let the only strife be, which shall be the first to yield, rather than contend. On no account allow yourselves to employ harsh, much less violent language toward each other. And if any contest arises which you cannot settle between yourselves without violence, let a united appeal to your Father, if he be present, or in his absence, to your grandparents, terminate the controversy. Seldom does a conflict of this kind arise without there being blame on both sides. And who so proper to make the proper award, and to adjust every difficulty, as those who love you all equally and dearly, and have age and experience on their side?

Let me enjoin on you to begin, as early as possible, to cherish a spirit of *habitual benevolence*—a desire, wherever you go, to promote the *happi-*

ness of all around you. Selfishness is the great master-sin of human nature. "All seek their own." The *young*, especially, are apt to be swallowed up in the excessive pursuit of their own enjoyment, and that enjoyment is rarely sought or found in ministering to the wants, and promoting the comfort of others. But rely upon it, dear children, this is a narrow and altogether deceptive view of the best means of happiness. Not only is it the divine command that we "love our neighbour as ourselves," but it is equally certain that obedience to this great law tends as directly to make ourselves happy, as it does to promote the comfort of the objects of our benevolent attention. If you wish to be happy yourselves, study continually to make all around you so too. The luxury of doing good is the richest luxury of which we are capable. It is the very spirit of Christ, who "went about doing good;" and the more closely we commune with him in the exercise of the same spirit, the more we secure true and rational enjoyment. Wherever you are, then, cultivate a spirit of sympathy with the afflicted, and the habit of flying spontaneously to the relief of suffering. You cannot begin too early to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to minister to the wants of the sick and dying, to relieve distress of every kind, and to "please every one for his good to edification:"—not by flattery, which is too commonly the method of pleasing adopted; but by letting

it be seen that you seek, as much as in you lies, to make all around you truly happy. Never promote mirth at the expense of others. Never allow yourselves to "set others by the ears" as it is sometimes expressed, for the sake of derision. Carefully avoid all those "tricks," which so many of the young delight in, and by which so much suffering, and sometimes even ultimately the loss of life, have been incurred. In a word, conscientiously cherish the principle and the habit of never giving a moment's pain to a human being, or even to a brute beast, unless it be necessary for their real good; and wherever you see pain, by whomsoever inflicted, do all in your power, consistent with other obligations, to relieve it, and to give rational pleasure. There is nothing, be assured, dear children, in all the splendour of fashionable display, in all the gratifications of sense, in all the delirious joys of giddy dissipation, once to be compared with the hallowed pleasure of habitually doing good to all within your reach. Yes, make doing good your "ruling passion," and you will be among the happiest of mortals.

Let me beseech you to watch over your *temper* with studious care. Few things are more unhappy in a young person of either sex, than an irritable, irascible temper. It betrays into a thousand indiscretions. It poisons social intercourse. It alienates friends. It destroys the comfort of the individual who indulges it; and it interferes with the

comfort of all with whom he converses. I have known this infirmity to cast a cloud over the whole course of many persons who were otherwise fitted to adorn and bless society. Watch and pray against it with the utmost diligence. "He that ruleth his own spirit is greater than he that taketh a city." "Be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath." Learn "by soft answers to turn away wrath," both in yourselves and others. Be not ready to take offence, or to consider any one as "an offender for a word." Never regard an honest difference of opinion from yourself as a personal affront. Surely the indulgence of such a spirit is as unreasonable as it is unhappy. Guard with the utmost vigilance against a jealous, suspicious temper. Ill nature, peevishness, and a disposition to take every thing by an unfavourable handle, and to indulge in satire and sarcasm, are revolting in every human being, but especially in the female sex. I have never known such a temper to be indulged without diminishing both the respectability and happiness of its possessor. Let a mild, amiable, conciliatory spirit reign in all your intercourse. Be ever kind, tender hearted, and forgiving, even as you hope to obtain forgiveness from the God of all grace. Let the spirit of benevolence, and a desire to please, shine in your countenances, and be manifest in your deportment in all companies; at home and on journies; in the public hotel, and in the parlour of a friend;

towards servants, as well as towards your equals or superiors. In a word, in temper as well as in conduct, "Whatsoever ye would that others should do unto you, do ye even so to them, for this is the law and the prophets."

In forming your moral character and habits, I entreat you to lay great stress upon cultivating a sacred and delicate regard to *truth*, in all your social intercourse. Rely upon it, you cannot pay too conscientious a regard to this point. A fault here is as dishonourable as it is criminal. I do not allow myself to fear that my beloved grandchildren, after the training they have received, will ever indulge in deliberate falsehood. In this there is a meanness as well as a sin, which I hope they will equally despise and abhor. But it is to be lamented that there is much in social conversation, in which many people deemed respectable are apt to indulge themselves, and which I hope you will make conscience of sacredly avoiding. I mean all exaggeration in your descriptions; all high-colouring in your statements; all indulgence in fabulous narratives, even in jest, for the amusement of company. Aside from the dictates of religion in this matter, which are sacred and conclusive, there is something in these habits adapted to lower the character, and to diminish the influence of those who indulge them, with all sober-minded people. Whatever may be the consequence, let a regard to the strictest verity, as if you were on oath, reign

in all you say and do. Avoid the meanness, as well as the sin of the slightest departure from absolute truth. Let all underhand deceptive contrivances, all low cunning, all habits of carrying your plans by disingenuous arts, be abhorred and avoided. How gratifying would it be to those who love you, to know that it had passed into something like a proverb among your acquaintance—"'The statement is from a Breckinridge—and therefore may be depended on!"

Let me farther entreat you to guard against all indulgence of the spirit of *pride*, or *vanity*. By *pride*, I mean such an inordinate and unreasonable conceit of our own superiority in any respect, as leads us to look down on others as beneath us, and to treat them with haughtiness, or contempt. And by *vanity*, I understand that excessive desire for the applause of others which leads to egotism, and such a weak anxiety to attract the notice, and gain the approbation of those around us, as are apt to betray into little and unworthy arts for gaining the object. That both ought to be repudiated, as at once folly and sin, I hope no formal argument will be necessary to convince you. But still, they are both besetting sins, which cleave with deplorable obstinacy to multitudes whose judgment is against them. Be assured, dear children, pride is as foolish as it is criminal. Who made you to differ from others? And what have you that you have not received? If you have minds, or an education,

or outward circumstances more favourable than those of many others, who conferred them upon you? If, therefore, you have received all, why should you glory as if you had not received them? I know that we sometimes hear people talk of a "laudable pride," an "honest pride," "a noble pride," &c. But such language is a grievous abuse of terms, and ought to be forever banished from the vocabulary of Christians. *Pride* was "the condemnation and snare of the devil," and is in all cases a weakness and a sin. To call a proper personal dignity and self-respect by this odious name, is altogether incorrect and deceptive. To speak of a disposition to avoid a mean action as "a noble pride," is a perversion of language, as well as of moral principle. "Be clothed with humility;" for God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall; for when pride cometh, then cometh shame, but with the lowly is wisdom." *Vanity* is a passion still more childish and degrading. It exhibits a rational creature hanging on the smiles and the praise of his fellow worms for his importance and happiness. O, what infatuation for miserable sinners, who deserve nothing at the hand of God but wrath, and the overflowing of wrath, and who are dependant on his bounty for every breath, to be puffed up with high thoughts of themselves, and arrogantly to claim the incense of praise! Fly, then, from

pride and vanity with the utmost vigilance. Study to be "meek and lowly in heart." "Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate." "In lowliness of mind esteem others better than yourselves." "Be not wise or great in your own conceits." Be not greedy of praise. Despise all the unworthy arts of seeking and fishing for it. Rely upon it, the lower you lie in the dust of abasement, the happier you will be. The more you are disposed to love and honour all around you according to their real character, the more infallibly you will secure their love and confidence in return. And the less anxious you are to gain the applause of men, the more likely you will be to attain it, if you are found humbly and diligently performing your duty. In short, if I wished you to gain the highest degree of esteem and honour among men, I would say—Do not seek this object anxiously, or even directly at all. Never inquire what others say or think of you. Speak of yourselves, in conversation, as little as possible. Treat your superiors with uniform respect, but not with fawning or flattery; and your inferiors, down to the lowest servant or beggar, with undeviating condescension and kindness; trying to benefit every one, and promote the happiness of every one; and you will have as much of the love and respect of all as you really deserve, and probably more. If you sincerely try to promote the happiness of all around you, and do it with a kind and

amiable manner, I believe it is one of the cases in which our Lord's declaration never fails to be fulfilled—"Give, and it shall be given unto you, good measure pressed down and running over shall men give into your bosom."

Strive with sacred care against every feeling approaching to the passion of *envy*. As you are now at an age when you are called daily to compete with school and play-mates, you may be sometimes strongly tempted to indulge in this passion. But it is a base passion. Beware of it. How fiend-like, to sicken and repine at excellence! How base, to be displeased and mortified when we contemplate the superior prosperity, happiness, or accomplishments of others! When you witness such superior attainments or excellence, let the only effort be to excite gratitude to God for its existence, and a generous emulation of it in yourselves.

Guard with vigilance against a *talebearing* and *tattling* spirit. I will not suppose you capable of deliberate *slander*, or cruelly circulating reports to the injury of others without just evidence. This is so base and mean, that I trust you will ever abhor and despise it. But it is the infirmity of many, who intend thereby no injury, that they delight in circulating news concerning their neighbours, and have not a little of the true gossipping spirit. This is a bad habit. It degrades the individual who indulges it, in the view of all wise,

reflecting people; often involves in painful explanations and difficulties; and is frequently followed by consequences of the most perplexing and disreputable kind. Never indulge the disposition to repeat idle stories about neighbours. If they are repeated in your presence, listen to them either in silence, or with a civil remark, which cannot possibly implicate you, or be construed into an approval of the scandal. It was an excellent appeal which was once made by a wise and benevolent man whom I knew in early life—"Why can you not talk more about *things*, than about *persons?*"

Let me farther exhort you, as a point of duty, to cultivate habitual *cheerfulness*. When I say this, you will not understand me as recommending a spirit of levity and frivolity. This is unworthy of rational, accountable creatures, and indicates as much of weakness as of sin. Those who spend their lives in gaiety and mirth, are "dead while they live." But by cultivating habitual cheerfulness, I mean cherishing a pleasant state of the animal spirits; as opposed to constitutional gloom, mental depression, and settled, clouded taciturnity, I mean habits, not of light, but of lively and affable conversation. Such a state of mind does good like a medicine. It contributes to our own enjoyment. It makes us more pleasant and useful to those with whom we converse. It may even operate to promote health and prolong life; and in various ways extend our power of doing good.

Guard with conscientious care against habits of *indolence.* A tendency to this sin is one of the radical symptoms of the great moral disease of our nature; and you cannot begin too early to labour and pray for effecting a cure. Fly from idleness as a habit connected with a legion of evils. Make a point of always having something useful to do—something to fill up every moment left vacant between the larger and more important tasks of life. I am aware that we all stand in need of *recreation;* but this is often best attained by *a change of employment.* When you have finished a sedentary task, which required intense application of mind, think, for a moment, whether there be not some other object to which you may attend for a short time, which will require no mental effort, but by attention to which, you may promote either your own health or comfort, or the advantage of others. Make it your daily study to "redeem the time." Try to turn every moment to some valuable account. For this purpose, form, as early as possible, a plan, a systematic order in your daily tasks. Without such a plan, more or less formally adopted, you will inevitably lose much time in passing from one engagement to another. But if you manage always to have something useful with which to fill up every little interval; so as never to be idle, and never to waste time with frivolous, or worse than frivolous employments, you will be more happy, and live more

to your own true honour, and the benefit of your generation.

I have only to add on the subject of this letter, a single word on the great importance of maintaining strict and habitual *temperance* in all your enjoyments. If you wish really to enjoy life, and to "live out all your days," you must exercise moderation and self-denial in eating and drinking, and in every department of indulgence. Temperance has been defined—the moderate use of things useful, and total abstinence from those which are pernicious. This is an excellent definition, which I trust you will ever keep in mind, and make your daily and hourly rule. To be thus temperate, is a divine command. It is eminently conducive to health. It is highly advantageous to the activity and strength of the powers of the mind. And it is an admirable defence against a thousand irregularities and mischiefs which cloud the faculties, destroy comfort, and lead to multiplied forms of disease, and to premature graves. If you habitually restrain appetite, deny yourselves, and "let your moderation be known" in all things, and to all men, you will avoid many evils which continually beset those who act on the system of self-indulgence. Never drink any thing but pure water, when in health; indulge in animal food but *once* in each day, and that in smaller quantities than most people consider as temperate. Labourers in the open air may, not only with impunity, but perhaps with

profit, eat animal food more than once every day; but I am persuaded few other persons can do it without disadvantage to their health. My personal experience and observation in regard to this point are very decisive. Nay, I would advise you to go one step farther. Make the experiment of wholly abstaining from animal food at least one day in each week, for the purpose of "giving nature a holyday;" of clearing the body and the mind from crudities; and taking a new start in refined feeling and unclogged activity.

In fine, let it be the object of your unceasing study and prayer, to "keep under the body;" to "crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts;" to subdue and restrain all irregular tempers; "if it be possible, as much as lieth in you, to live peaceably with all men;" to avoid wounding the feelings of any one with whom you converse, unless required to do it by a pure sense of duty; to promote the happiness of all around you; and to be continually seeking and improving opportunities of doing good.

LETTER VIII.

MANNERS.

Dear Children:—I wish it were in my power to give you a perfect and vivid representation of the manners of your lamented Mother. There was in them a sweetness, a gracefulness, and an attraction truly rare. Wherever she went, they at once gained her friends. I am sure if you had been old enough at her decease to appreciate them; or, if I could now depict them to the life, you would have a deeper impression of the importance of happy manners; of their value to their possessor; of their benign influence on social intercourse, than I can now hope to impart. As it is, I hope you will be willing to take on trust my statement of the fact concerning her, and that you will be stimulated to seek a similar accomplishment.

If it be true, as has been often said, that a good face is an "open letter of recommendation," wherever its possessor appears; we may, with quite as much emphasis, say the same of pleasant engaging manners. Nay, we may go farther. The most beautiful face and form that ever existed, if unaccompanied by agreeable manners, will soon be contemplated with indifference, if not with dis-

gust. While, on the contrary, where there is an entire absence of personal beauty, there may be, and often are found, such manners as captivate and win wherever they are seen, and with a power felt by all, however remote they may be from the possession of such manners themselves.

I shall not tax either your patience or my own, by entering largely into the subject of manners. On this extensive subject I refer you to a volume on "Clerical Manners and Habits" which I published a few years ago, and in which considerable minuteness of detail is indulged. For although that work was intended more particularly for the benefit of clergymen, and especially of candidates for the sacred office; yet a large portion of it is equally applicable to all classes and professions, and to both sexes. I recommend the volume referred to, to your serious attention, and to your careful study. And whatever may be your situation in life, I think you will find much in it worthy of your regard. At any rate, if it be not so, I have failed of gaining my main object in its publication.

I will not, however, content myself with merely referring you to the volume in question. It is my wish, in this little system of affectionate advices, to call your attention to a few particulars on this subject which may be considered as more immediately appropriate at your present tender age, and, perhaps, on that account, more likely to dwell upon your memory than the contents of a volume.

You will, perhaps, ask me, what I mean by those "good manners" which I would recommend? I answer, by such manners I mean that mode of personal address and deportment toward all with whom we converse which is dictated by the meekness, benevolence, and purity of the Gospel. In a word, "true politeness"—the most genuine politeness—that which I would earnestly desire those whom I love to cherish and cultivate—is *the religion of Christ acted out in the whole temper, conversation, and deportment.* The simple, unembarrassed, gentle expression of mingled respect and kindness toward all with whom we converse, from the hovel to the palace, is the perfection of manners. These are manners which become all times, places, companies, and circumstances, and which will carry their possessor through the world with acceptance and comfort.

Perhaps, in your inexperience, you may be disposed to ask, what is the great value of such manners as are here recommended? If you have any doubt on this subject *now*, I am persuaded a little more knowledge of the world will satisfy you that their value is unspeakably great. Few people are adequate judges of those solid intellectual and moral qualities which form a character of high excellence. But of personal manners, all are judges; at any rate, all are capable of perceiving, and in some degree estimating, their value. Only a small portion of those with whom you converse

are able to discern whether you are wise and well informed; but every child can see whether you have a sweet voice, a pleasant countenance, an amiable, kind and respectful mode of address, or the contrary. Can there be, then, a more obvious dictate, both of policy and duty, than to cultivate that which, to multitudes, is more attractive than real merit; which secures to merit a hearing, and an influence which it would not otherwise obtain; and which will be likely, in many cases, to open a door to usefulness which, without it, would, in all probability, have continued impenetrably closed? In repeated instances have I known persons of weak minds, and of small information, but of remarkably fascinating manners, carry all before them in circles of society into which persons of far higher qualifications, both intellectual and moral, but defective in the attractions of manner, were scarcely able to obtain admittance, and very inadequately esteemed when admitted. A soft, insinuating address has, a thousand times, rendered its possessor every where acceptable and popular, when, on the score of real merit, he ought by no means to have enjoyed so much public favour.

But this is not all. Pleasant attractive manners not only have a paramount influence with the superficial and unthinking; but they have more power even on the minds of the wise and the good than is commonly imagined. To every human being, that which is intrinsically excellent, appears

doubly attractive when presented in a pleasing manner. Truth, even to those who know it to be truth, finds a more cordial welcome; and duty, even among its most sincere and enlightened friends, commands a more ready obedience, when they are clothed in an attractive garb, and speak in alluring accents. That the very same words, which, when uttered by some, are intolerably offensive; when spoken in the mild, respectful manner of others, are welcome, and even delightful—that the very same action, which, performed by some, is censured; when performed by others, of perhaps less talent or virtue, is lauded to excess; are among the most notorious facts in human life; and that not in the circles of ignorance and dissipation only, but also in those of the most estimable portions of mankind.

To despise or undervalue the cultivation of *manners*, then, argues a great want of practical wisdom. It is a subject worthy of your constant regard. To neglect it, is equally to oppose reason and experience, and to set at naught some of the most precious means of gaining access to the human heart. And when I speak of cultivating good manners, do not imagine that I mean the formal, showy, pompous manners which some commend, and seem to aim at. The truth is, the perfection of manners—the ultimate point which is the result of the very best culture, is to attain that ease, simplicity, modesty, and gentleness of deportment in

every thing, which has nothing of the artificial, nothing of display about it. But to be more particular.

The first characteristic of manners to which I would direct your attention, as lying at the foundation of all excellence, is *benignity*. Without the law of *benevolence*, reigning in the heart, and governing the temper and the life, there may be much pomp and courtliness of manner; many a heartless smile, and many a flattering form of address; but there can be no genuine politeness. The essence of this consists in the spirit of cordial good will and kindness shining in the countenance; expressing itself in the language and tones of respect and benevolent regard; and flowing through all the channels of human intercourse, and all the minutiæ of human life. This is the vital principle of good manners. Just in proportion as you really desire to increase the happiness of all around you; to consult their ease; to anticipate their wants; and to promote their welfare—you will spontaneously manifest these feelings in all situations and companies. Your whole deportment will be pleasing, attractive, and graceful, without your having studied artificial rules. This is the foundation and the sum of all; but it may not be improper to trace the radical principle into some of its minute details.

In all social intercourse, let *respectful attention* mark your whole manner. To turn away your

eyes from the person who is addressing you; or to manifest in any way that you are thinking, or wish to be thinking, of something else, is a great breach of good manners; cannot fail of giving pain to those with whom you converse; and must deprive you of a large part of the benefit of conversation. When you look your companion gently and respectfully, but firmly in the face, you manifest attention; you enable yourselves to watch his countenance, and mark the impression which you make on his mind; to say nothing of the power of the eye in seconding and enforcing all that is said.

Cultivate *affability* of manner. By this I mean that style of manners which is distinguished by ease, simplicity, and courteousness; a deportment opposed to haughtiness, reserve, coldness, or taciturnity; in short, to every thing that is adapted to repel, or to prevent freedom and comfort of approach. I am aware that constitutional temperament has much to do with this. But still, it is equally true that affability may and ought to be carefully cultivated; and that there are few things better adapted to conciliate good will, to inspire confidence, to invite freedom of communication, and to place at ease all with whom we converse.

Study to exercise *gentleness* and *mildness* in all your deportment and conversation. Guard against every thing harsh, severe, rough, abrupt, or in any way repulsive in your language, voice, or manner.

Let the meekness and gentleness of wisdom appear in every look, tone, and expression. By a mild, respectful address, you may at once reprove impertinence, disarm violence, and put even brutality to shame. Give all diligence, then, to be "gentle toward all men." Learn the happy art of conversing with gentleness, of giving your commands with gentleness, of arguing with gentleness, of contending with gentleness, and of even reproving with gentleness. Both commands and reproofs, as well as arguments, when dispensed in this manner, have not only more dignity, but also more weight than when invested with an opposite character.

Few things are more opposed to good breeding than a *loud*, *boisterous* manner in social intercourse. Whether this be indulged in laughter, or in conversation, it is equally exceptionable as an offence against both delicacy and dignity. With regard to *females*, an offence against this rule, is peculiarly revolting. It is a sure sign of vulgarity, and ought to be carefully avoided. But, in either sex, it is a blemish which well bred people never fail to notice.

Closely allied to this is the habit of *rude familiarity* which some affect, and to which they give the name of social pleasantry. This is undignified, and, to all delicate people, offensive. Mutual dignity and respect are indispensable to the continued existence of Christian intercourse, in its most pure,

delicate, and profitable form. If you wish to maintain such intercourse, be free and unconstrained; but never indulge in coarse familiarity. Those who are worthy of your love will certainly be repelled rather than attracted by it.

Remember, too, that all *interruption* of any one with whom you are conversing, or blunt *contradiction* of his statements, is an offence against delicate manners. However erroneous he may be, hear him out; and however certain you may be that his representations are false, rectify his mistake, not bluntly, but with kindness and respect.

Guard against *talking too much* in company. He who is very talkative incurs disadvantages of a very serious kind. He cheapens himself; tires his hearers; and must, of course, diminish his usefulness. However rich and instructive any one's talk may be, yet, if there be too much of it, both his dignity and his influence cannot fail of being impaired. "A fool's voice," says Solomon, "is known by the multitude of his words." "In the multitude of words," says the same inspired teacher, "there wanteth not sin; but he that refraineth his lips is wise." And again, "He that hath knowledge, spareth his words."

But another extreme in social intercourse, is that of excessive *reserve* and *taciturnity*. Some from physical temperament; others from abstraction or absence of mind; and a third class, per-

haps, from still more exceptionable causes, wrap themselves up in a chilling reserve in company—never speaking but when addressed; and then answering as briefly as possible, and relapsing into silence again. This is surely unhappy in a social being, and ought to be carefully avoided. While you avoid garrulity, then, sink not down into obstinate silence. If you find yourselves, from any cause, prone to this, it is abundantly worth while to take pains to counteract it, and to labour to have something ready to say that shall be at once acceptable and instructive.

In regard to *uncleanly and vulgar personal habits*, I will not suppose you capable of them; and, therefore, shall not dwell upon them. All spitting on floors, lounging in your seats, putting up your feet on chairs or stools, leaning with your elbows on tables—these, and all similar habits, I hope, after the training you have had, you will avoid with instinctive repugnance. But there is one habit which I would earnestly recommend, as favourable not merely to good manners, but also to *health*. Learn to *sit erect*, not only in company, but even in your most private apartment. Reading or writing in a half-sunken or reclining posture is unfriendly to a graceful carriage; is apt to betray unwarily into similar postures in company; prepares the way for the sinking, half-bent postures which disfigure so many of the feeble and aged:

and really tends to bring on premature decrepitude.

Do not affect *wit* or *punning* in conversation. So many of those who try to make themselves acceptable by such attempts, not only fail, but often render themselves a laughing stock by it, that there is little probability of your succeeding as wits or punsters. But even with respect to those whose talents in this way are ever so great, there is so much danger of their indulging those talents unseasonably and imprudently, so as to offend and alienate friends, that such powers ought to be deprecated rather than desired, and their exercise, if possessed, subjected to the severest restriction. I never knew more than one person of wit who was strictly discreet and delicate in its use. But I have known thousands who, by their miserable attempts to display what they possessed either not at all, or in a very small degree, succeeded only in exposing themselves to ridicule. And I have known many real wits, who almost every day wounded feelings, and alienated friends by their reckless effusions.

Do not indulge the habit in conversation of *talking of yourselves*. Hardly any quality is more apt to appear in social intercourse than personal vanity. This leads to egotism, so that the idea of *self* appears to be ever present to the imagination. Hence we perpetually find people talking of themselves; what they have done; what they have

said; what others have said and done to their honour; in short, bringing into view something to their own advantage, or that of their family or relatives. Rely upon it, if you have real worth, the less *you* say about it the better; and if you have it not, every claim of it, direct or indirect, can only sink you lower in the estimation of those with whom you converse.

Carefully form the habit of adverting to all the properties of *time*, *place* and *circumstances* in conversation. When you are about, in company, to make a remark, or to introduce a new topic of conversation, look round on the circle, and ask yourself, whether there is any one present whose feelings would be likely to be hurt by what you are about to say, or who would be placed by it in embarrassing circumstances. Be very sure for example, when about to make, in company, an unfavourable remark on an absent person, that no relative or special friend of that person is among your hearers. For, although you ought never to make a remark on any one which the Christian spirit cannot justify; yet in certain circumstances, a remark perfectly proper in itself, may be unseasonable, and peculiarly painful to some who hear it. Guard against the possibility of such an occurrence. This is a dictate of sound worldly policy. A departure from it is a gross violation of true politeness. But it may be said, still more emphatically,

to be a departure from the principles of Christian benevolence.

Avoid the too frequent *use of superlatives* in conversation. The habit of many, when they wish to express either approbation or censure, is to employ the very strongest terms which the English language affords. If they think favourably of the talents or the performance of any one, they are apt to speak of them as "noble, admirable," as of "the first order;" or in some terms expressive of the very highest excellence. And, on the other hand, if they undertake to express disapprobation, the terms "mean," "execrable," "detestable," are the softest that they think of employing. This is a bad habit. It renders both the praise and censure of those who indulge it of less value in the estimation of all sober-minded and discriminating judges. If you wish your judgment to pass for any thing in the view of the wise and reflecting, you must learn to express opinions in that guarded and moderate manner which indicates intellectual discrimination rather than undistinguishing emotion. You know where it is said "Fools admire, where men of sense approve."

Carefully avoid giving *unnecessary trouble* wherever you are. The difference between different persons in this respect is very conspicuous. Some, when in the houses of their friends, have so many little wants, so many errands to perform, and are

so absorbed in their own affairs, that, if permitted, they would keep several servants and others constantly employed in waiting upon them. You may rely upon it you can never be, long together, welcome visitants in families which you subject to so much trouble. Make as few demands as possible on the time and attention of those whose hospitality you are enjoying. Never call upon their servants to wait upon you when it is practicable to avoid it. Never allow the occupations or order of any family to be set aside or disarranged on your account, where it is possible to prevent it. In short, act universally on the principle of doing every thing that you can for yourselves, and making as few demands as possible on the time and labour of those around you.

In *calling on friends* consult their convenience, as well as your own; and in some cases in preference to your own. Many make their calls at such hours, and sit so inordinately long, as to throw a whole family into disorder, and inflict very serious pain. Never sit long in your social calls at any time; but when you make them at times which may, by possibility interfere with domestic meals, let them be *very short;* be on the watch for every symptom of engagement or uneasiness on the part of those whom you visit, and on the appearance of any thing of the kind, instantly take your leave.

Constantly maintain the habit of *early rising.* Few things are more conducive to health and ac-

tivity both of body and mind. A disposition to lie long in bed in the morning, is, at once, a symptom and a cause of feeble digestion, of nervous debility, and of general languor. Go early to bed. Avoid much night study. Quit your beds by dawn of day, and, in winter, before the dawn, and thus secure several hours of unbroken time, for devotion, for study, and for gentle exercise in the open air, before breakfast, and before the interruptions of the earliest visiters commence.

Cultivate habits of moderation in *dress*. You are never likely to be able to indulge in very inordinate expense in bodily adorning; and I will venture to say, this inability, wherever it exists, is a great blessing. Few things evince more weakness of mind, and absence of Christian principle, than extravagance and splendor in dress. In young men it is a sad evidence of "dandyism" and folly; and even in young females, an excessive indulgence in fashion, in finery, and the extreme of *devotion* to bodily adorning, never fails to depress their character in the estimation of the wise and good. Try to set an example of sober, dignified *moderation* in regard to this whole subject. Always guard against negligence of dress. Conscientiously avoid exposing yourselves to the charge of careless, slatternly habits. But never make dress an idol. Reject every thing dazzling, or what is commonly called "dashing," in outward ornament. Be not seen aping the extreme

of fashion; and ever remember how unworthy it is of Christians to be worshippers of external adorning; and how peculiarly disreputable for the children of *clergymen* to bear such a character.

Thus, dear children, I have endeavoured, with brevity, to give you a few paternal counsels, which, I would fondly hope, may, by the grace of God, be made to promote your benefit, when the hand which penned them shall be sleeping in the dust. You will perceive from the *order* in which I have placed my counsels, that I consider real heart religion as the most indispensable and precious of all attainments; that my first and highest wish concerning you is, that you may love your Father's and Mother's God, and make it your daily aim to follow her to that world of bliss and glory to which, as we trust, she has gone before us. Next to seeing you real Christians, my desire is to see you enlightened, polished, benevolent, amiable, attractive members of society, respected and beloved by all who know you.

Remember, I beseech you, that the friends of your Parents will expect much from you. The advantages which you have enjoyed, and are daily enjoying, impose upon you a solemn responsibility in the sight both of God and man. Many prayers have ascended to heaven on your behalf. Pray without ceasing for yourselves, that you may be

preserved from the paths of sin and folly, and led in the ways of heavenly wisdom.

I have no doubt that the counsels I have given you will commend themselves to your judgment, and that you will promptly form the resolution to make them your constant guide. But you cannot rely upon your own wisdom or strength to do this. Such are your own infirmities, and so multiplied the temptations and allurements which surround you, that you will need at every step, guidance and help from above. Happy will it be for you if you habitually bear this in mind, and acknowledge God in all your ways, that he may direct your steps.

And now, dear children, I bid you farewell. When I look forward, and imagine to myself what may be your course in life—when I think of the corruptions and perils with which you are surrounded, and what *may* be the result of them, I hardly know how to express my anxieties and fears: but when I recollect the love and faithfulness of that God who blessed your Parents, I feel willing to commit you into his hands, and to trust his grace for your temporal and eternal welfare. May he guide you by his counsel! May he guard you amidst all the dangers of youth and of riper years; and finally, "present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding great joy!" O how unutterably precious the thought

of meeting you all at last—with those of our beloved family who have already gone before us, and those who are yet to follow—around the throne of our covenant God, and rejoicing forever in his presence and glory! Such will be the prayer until his last breath, of your

Affectionate Grandfather,

SAMUEL MILLER.

PRINCETON, July 10, 1839.

THE END.